

An interview with a former Madam

①

PROSTITUTION

An Interview Conducted by

Judy Brett

March 31, 1981

SpC.
977
.245 2
P
G.C.

©1981 by the Vigo County Public Library
Terre Haute, Indiana

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

VIGO COUNTY
PUBLIC LIBRARY

No. 8202664

SpC. 977.245:P

"WORKS OF REFERENCE"

NARRATOR DATA SHEET

03/31/81

DATE

Name of narrator: PROSTITUTION

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Birthdate: _____ Birthplace: _____

Length of residence in Terre Haute: _____

Education: _____

Occupational history: former Madam

Special interests, activities, etc. _____

Major subject(s) of interview: Prostitution in Terre Haute;

Red Light District

No. of tapes: 2 Length of interview: 2 hrs. 52 min.

Terms of legal agreement: _____

Interviewing sessions:

Date

Time

Location

Interviewer

8202864

PROSTITUTION-TERRE HAUTE

Tape 1

Tuesday, March 31, 1981

Narrator's Home, Terre Haute, Indiana

INTERVIEWER: Judy Brett

TRANSCRIBER: Kathleen Skelly

For: Vigo County Oral History Project

©VCPL 1981

JB: I am Judy Brett and I am talking to /
/ on Tuesday, March 31, 1981, in
her home.

To begin with, tell me what was the district
that was the West End /Terre Haute's red light
district for many years/? What area was that?

NARRATOR: It consisted of from Cherry Street -- the
north side of Cherry Street -- to the south side
of Chestnut from 4th Street west to the river.

JB: And when would you say was the West End
really in its prime?

NARRATOR: Well, from what I hear, that was before I
ever come here. It was pretty well known and sort
of wild, I imagine, but it was a little village all
by itself. The only people that ever got into
trouble was the ones that were looking for it. You
never went out of your neighborhood looking for
anyone. They come there looking for you, which to
my idea is an ideal situation -- better than we
have now.

The girls -- at that time I'm speaking -- if
they smoked a cigarette, they could not do it out
on the porch. In fact, they couldn't sit on the
porch. If they went out with a sleeveless dress,
they had to be covered with either a scarf or a
sweater.

They had orders. When they first come, you
called headquarters and you were checked in. You
gave your name and where you come from -- which
generally was a lie because you were supposed to
come strictly from Indiana, and a lot of girls
lied about it. On the other hand, you were asked

NARRATOR: what day you would take off. I'll say Wednesday if you wanted. You went to the hairdresser and you went to the doctor and you done your shopping. You never left the neighborhood after that. You were in your own neighborhood. After dinner or supper, whichever, you would walk around the neighborhood until . . . oh, from after then 'til dark, whenever you wanted. And everyone got along very nicely. The colored girls were all down west of 2nd Street except one, I think. Yeah, one. That was on 2nd Street. The rest were down around . . . from 2nd around the corner there on Eagle, and we just never had any trouble among ourselves. Everybody was sort of helpful. If anybody died and they didn't have any money, everybody pitched in and saw that they got buried.

I remember when Jimmy Dorris died. He'd been over in a bootleggin' joint on 4th Street and he fell down the steps and he bruised his head. They put him in jail for being drunk. And Dr. Joseph Kunkler at 4th and Chestnut was the jail doctor. And he put mercurochrome on it, and they put Jimmy in a cell. And Rachel went down to see him. The second night she said, "You know Jimmy just acts awful crazy." She said, "He's trying to tell me something, and I can't understand him." And she said he just walked away. He said, "Don't make any difference." Just walked away back into his cell.

So that night the woman that was matron at the jail called me up, and she said that they had to send him to the hospital because he was in bad shape. I said, "Well, what's wrong with him?" She said, "Well, he has pneumonia," which was reasonable. So, I thought, well, I'll just call the hospital and see what I can find out.

So I called the hospital, and it happened that the girl on the telephone was a member of VFW, which I am, and I said, "Well, how on earth did he get pneumonia?" She said, "Oh, it isn't pneumonia!" I said, "What is it?" She said, "It's his head.

Tape 1

NARRATOR: He injured his head." Well, of course, he went unconscious and died.

But at first she didn't want to give me this information, but I said, "Well, he doesn't have any family around here. We don't know who he is outside of his name and if he should die, we'd want him buried; and if you will tell me, I will start now so that we will have the money by the time we need it." She said, "Well, I can't tell you but I will tell you this. He is critically critical."

So I went around and told everybody, and we got our money together. The woman across the street, Mary Walker, had an extra grave at Woodlawn Cemetery and a suit of her father's who had died not too long before. So she gave the grave and the suit of clothes. So we got the rest of the money together and buried Jimmy Dorris at Woodlawn Cemetery.

JB: So it was a very caring neighborhood, the West End?

NARRATOR: Everybody helped each other.

JB: You commented that you thought the West End was in its prime before you got there?

NARRATOR: That's right. I imagine it was. Uh huh.

JB: Now, you came in what year?

NARRATOR: In 1925.

JB: 'Twenty-five.

NARRATOR: Um hmm.

JB: So how much before that would it have been really in its prime?

NARRATOR: Well, in the first war World War I I imagine . . . See, it was closed up on account of Rose Poly Rose Polytechnic Institute, now Rose-Hulman

NARRATOR: Institute⁷ was at Gerstmeyer. /Gerstmeyer Technical High School, 1250 Locust Street, occupied the old Rose Polytechnic building after the college moved to its present location east of the city in 1923.⁷ And within five miles, why, it was restricted, see. So it was closed then. Well, it had

JB: Closed during . . . what time would that have been?

NARRATOR: First war, that would be '17, '18. So then after the war, of course, everybody come back. And then I imagine this was all

You know we've had our . . . it's a political football; it always was. Whoever was mayor, whatever kooky idea he had, you know, to go along with the church people and you to get along with your votes and their vote, why, he had to carry water on both shoulders. One time, put the shades up. Another time, keep the shades down daytime. Don't go outside. (laughs) Don't stand up, don't sit down.

JB: So a different mayor would change the rules for you?

NARRATOR: That's right. Maybe he might change the rules daily.

JB: So it wouldn't just change from mayor to mayor, but it could change from day to day?

NARRATOR: Could change in two hours! Just whoever talked to him last.

But you got so you didn't pay too much attention to him; you just went on because it's a question of economics. You know you're going to have to eat and pay rent. And if you didn't work, you couldn't do it. So everybody just went on their own way.

The biggest hypocrite of all the mayors we ever had was Vern McMillan. He took the idea on himself

NARRATOR: that he closed the West End. Well, he didn't!

JB: When was that?

NARRATOR: That was in 1942, in April. And Helen Burgune, which was the Health, Education and Welfare at that time under Franklin Roosevelt, had a meeting in Terre Haute with all the businessmen. They were going to close the West End. Well, all those businessmen on Main Street thrived on the West End.

So, Mr. Levinson called me up. He said, "I want you to come up here. I'm going to have to talk to you." "Well," I said, "I'll come tomorrow." He said, "No," he said, "tomorrow will be too late. You come now."

So I said O.K. and I went up there. And he said, "Now, what I'm telling you is in great confidence. I'm just telling you." He said, "I've got quite a bit of money out in your house," and he said, "I want you to help me get it if you will."

I said, "I'll help you. Tell me what it is."

He said, "Everything is gonna be closed -- wartime measure."

So I went home and I told the girls, I said, "Well, whatever business you got -- the paperboy, the laundry woman and that -- pay 'em because you're gonna have to leave soon as we get these orders." So the next morning /William C./ Searcy was the lieutenant and Bill Sappington was patrolman. I can never remember who the third one was, but there were three of them. They came and they rang the bell and . . .

JB: This is now April, 1942?

NARRATOR: 'Forty-two.

JB: The month of April in 1942.

NARRATOR: Um hm. So my housekeeper come upstairs and

NARRATOR: told me that the police wanted me. And I knew there was no trouble in the house or anything; and I said, "Oh, tell 'em to come back later. I'm not up."

And she come back and said, "They want to talk to you now." So I went downstairs and I just sat down on the steps. They were standing there, and I sat down on the steps. And they said . . . started reading the "wherefores" and the "whereas" and one thing another; and I said, "Well, let me read it myself. I can . . ."

"No, we'll read it to you." So they read it. Searcy said, "What are you gonna do?" I said, "Well, I'll do what everybody else does." But I said, "Wait a minute. I've got one girl in the house sick. Whether she can leave or not, I don't know, but she's under a doctor's care." So he said, "O.K." They had 24 hours to leave.

So they all left. Of course, we just waited a little while and everybody come back. Worked quiet. So he /McMillan/ always took the idea that he closed the West End. But he didn't because all the time that he said he had it closed, Joan Lee at 210, her girls sat in front of that window on that enclosed porch and they looked like they were nude which never happened in the West End before. They sat like this /bent over with arms clasped around legs/. They had on a bra and pants. They looked like they were nude. And I've seen the people line up a block -- women and men lookin' and laughin' and seein' what was going on. They looked just like they were undressed!

JB: And this was after the houses were closed, supposedly?

NARRATOR: Yeeaah.

JB: You mentioned that Mr. Levinson said, "I've got quite a bit of money out on your house." What did he mean by that?

Tape 1

NARRATOR: Well, he meant that the girls had bought clothing -- hats, shoes, and stuff. They bought 'em charge or credit or whatever you want to call it.

JB: What was his position downtown?

NARRATOR: He had a nice clothing store.

JB: What was that called?

NARRATOR: Levinson's. It was on the north side of Wabash /640 Wabash Avenue/. He had beautiful clothes. Right there about where Joseph's or some of them were. I can't remember now just . . . but right along in that vicinity. /He/ had beautiful clothes.

JB: So he really liked the business from your girls?

NARRATOR: Shuure. Regardless of what money they made, it went to Wabash Avenue. Rings, watches, jewelry, furs, automobiles. That's when Wabash Avenue started going to hell, when the West End closed up. They didn't have that business.

JB: What other store owners talked to you directly about how the West End supported their business besides Mr. Levinson?

NARRATOR: Oh, you mean that they owed anybody?

JB: Well, just indicated to you that they really needed West End business.

NARRATOR: Oh, just a lot of them. I remember Anchor Furniture, John Tatelman; he done a lot of business in the West End. I think he finally went to Israel. He was a very nice person. And we all talked. And there are some of 'em on Wabash Avenue now that I talk to now and then that's been there for years, and we all agree to the same thing. It was ready money every day.

NARRATOR: And I'll tell you another thing. I've seen many a person drive up in front of my house on Cherry Street with a load of . . . wife and children and whatnot, and they'd give 'em the money (especially now before Easter and Christmas and that), send 'em up town. They /the husbands/ would wait in the car. Well, they'd sneak in somewhere while they /the family/ were gone and be back in the car, see? Well, that's money they don't get now.

JB: So a man would go to one of the houses while his family went shopping?

NARRATOR: Shuure! And I'm of the opinion what you don't know don't hurt you. And like I said before, any woman that thinks her husband don't mess around someplace else now and then, she's got another thought comin' because, honey, I've seen 'em all come through my door. Preachers and laborers and in-betweens. So anybody /that/ gets that idea, that's . . . I would swear to my dyin' day that I didn't believe 'em 'cause I wouldn't.

JB: But you saw what? People go to the houses that most people would never suspect would go?

NARRATOR: Sure. There's the one that would sneak in, you know, like this (gesturing), coming in . . .

JB: Putting his collar up?

NARRATOR: How about that guy that died at Kate Adair's house?

JB: A guy who died at . . .

NARRATOR: Yeah, over at Charleston you know . . . Martinsville, I think. He used to be an official over there. And he had gone to the doctor. A doctor gave him a shot. Well, he sneaked over to . . . he was supposed to meet her at the Bonanza. Isn't that /at/ 3rd and Eagle there where . . . that's where the tavern used to be, right there

NARRATOR: where that is. So he sneaked over there. And this girl (I knew her very well. She stayed with me afterwards.) she said he just started to sit down and take his shoes off and he fell over. Dead. So they dressed him and called the police. They said, "What happened?"

Well, of course, everybody wanted to know what happened and how he got there. So finally they told the undertaker, "Well now, we'll just tell you, but don't tell his wife because this is the way it was." So what the undertaker told her, I don't know.

Then there was another one. He died on New Year's Day at Moody Joneses. And I could hear Irene screamin' yet. She come running outta that house a-hollerin' and screamin' (laughing). And they were engaged very busily when he died. And she had to throw him off of her, and it scared her to death and she went screaming through the house.

JB: When was that?

NARRATOR: Oh, God, that was . . . I'm trying to think if that was after '33, I believe it was. I believe it was after beer come in. But I remember it was on New Year's Day and we'd just had orders. Everything was supposed to be so quiet. Here come the ambulance and the police and everybody, and we couldn't figure out what in the name of God went wrong. Pretty soon they brought this figure out all covered up. But the papers come out that he was going to a football game, I think it said, and he dropped dead on the street. But that's where he died.

JB: New Year's after 1933.

NARRATOR: In the '30s, I believe it was.

JB: Who was Irene? You said Irene . . .

NARRATOR: It was Irene _____, the girl that was in the room with him, blonde . . .

JB: (laughs)

NARRATOR: . . . Scared her to death.

JB: Whose house was that in?

NARRATOR: Moody Jones'. It was on /the southeast corner of/ North 3rd Street /and Eagle Street/.

JB: What were some of the other businesses in the West End? There were houses and what else?

NARRATOR: Just houses and lunch rooms and taverns, saloons -- whatever you want to call them.

JB: Those were the main businesses?

NARRATOR: That's all. It was just right in that particular . . . Then finally . . . well now at one time, before I was there, there was a grocery store there, too. In fact, that was Nasser's grocery store. /Northwest corner of 4th and Eagle streets/

JB: That was while you were there?

NARRATOR: Oh, yes. Uh huh, they had little grocery stores, and then finally the market moved over there -- Farmers' Market on 2nd and Eagle. It isn't there any more; it's all gone. But . . . and there were some people down there now like McGinty's. They just lived there. They had a saloon there /southwest corner of 2nd and Eagle streets/ in saloon days and they just lived upstairs. And their daughter was married to Tommy Smith, the J.P. /Justice of the Peace/. He had been city judge in his time. I think he got sent to prison for election fraud during the Donn Roberts troubles before my time. But he was J.P. in my time. And when she died here several years ago, she left quite a bit of money to St. Mary-of-the-Woods /College/. That's who Rita Smith was that they

Tape 1

NARRATOR: didn't know who left the money.

And let's see, Hominey, he lived upstairs there over his place. Hominey Godsey, he lived upstairs over what had been his saloon /233½ North 2nd/. They just stayed there.

JB: How were all of the houses in the West End alike? What did they all have in common?

NARRATOR: The business is the only thing you can say in common because there was a caste system there that nobody else would understand. Now, there was a lot of places that were just dumps . . . just dumps.

JB: In the West End?

NARRATOR: In the West End. A lot of them were just drunks. And a lot of them, oh, you just spoke to them as you went by and that's all. You'd just say "hi" and walked on. You didn't have anything in common with them outside of the business.

And then in later years, there's about four or five of them . . . now there had been some (we always called them "junkers" -- dope fiends) down there before, but I had never come into contact with any of 'em until, finally, there was a girl . . . she was an older girl and old girls can't make any money So I told her, I said, "Well," . . . she had gone to school with my husband over at Danville. I said, "Well, come on over and you can stay with me; and if you make anything, you can just keep it."

Well, my God, she would be washin' the walls at 11 o'clock at night, washin' my stockings. I said, "Well, you don't have to wash my clothes! You don't need to scrub those walls." "Well, I just want to!" Well, finally one night (This was back in bootleggin' days, and we lived next door; we didn't live at the place) I heard the plant

Tape 1

NARRATOR: where we kept the whisky hid open, and I heard it close. I used to have real good ears. And I told Mick, I said, "Somebody's in the plant." "Well, how could you tell?" I said, "Well, I can hear 'em!" He said, "You couldn't hear 'em." I said, "O.K. Stick your head out that window and see if you can hear." He said, "By God, you're right!"

So the next morning I waited and everyone left the breakfast table except one girl. I said, "Helen, were you in the plant last night?" "Nooo." "Well," I said, "somebody was and there was no money in the box." And I said, "I'll find out who done it or I'll just fire everybody." So she kinda squirmed around a little bit, and she said, "Well, I'm not gonna take the blame for it." She said, "I've got my boy to support." (She had a son to support.) And she said, "I need my job." She said, "It was Nell."

I said, "Oh, well, O.K." I told Mick, I said, "You'll have to fire her. I can't." I said, "I just . . ." I liked her, see. I said, "I just can't fire her." So he done it this way. He said, "Nell, when you get a chance to find a place, take it." She said, "I understand, Mick, and I don't blame you." So she went the second door to Mag Morrison's. Now, I didn't believe that Nell was on dope. Two or three people told me but I didn't believe it. And finally, she told me herself. I said, "My God . . ." And she took that underneath her fingernails so that you wouldn't know that she took it! Well, Laura and Nell and Kate Murphy . . . it seems like another one that got sent to prison for dope.

JB: These were all girls?

NARRATOR: Um hm.

JB: When was that?

NARRATOR: I'm trying to think. Well, it was still in bootleggin' days. It must have been '30 . . . just

Tape 1

NARRATOR: in the . . . before '33 because that's when beer come back. Must have been the last of '32 or somewhere along in there. Can't remember the date just exactly.

While they were there, Laura kept writing to me; and I wrote to her so she could come out if she had someone to sponsor her. Well, I got a woman to sponsor her. /The/ woman incidentally was a sales-lady for Levinson's. So I asked her if she would sign her report and she said yes; so, she come down.

Well, she got so she wasn't payin' Miss Tucker. She bought beautiful . . . she was skinny as a rail and had the most . . . she could wear clothes that you wouldn't dream would look good on anything but a mannequin. And hats! Cocky looking hats looked beautiful on her. So she would always stall Miss Tucker. She couldn't pay her. She couldn't pay her. She said, "Doesn't Laura make any money?" So there was a little smoking stand there and I opened it. I said, "Miss Tucker, that money there is Laura's. You tell her I showed it to you and that you want some money." She wasn't even payin' her. But she got on the dope right away, see?

Once . . . they don't never get off of it. That's something that eats their whole life away. They never get off of it.

JB: Did all three of those girls work for you?

NARRATOR: No, the Murphy girl didn't.

JB: Who did she work for?

NARRATOR: I don't think she worked for anybody. She run a house after her husband died. And that's how she got hooked on it, by giving him shots when he was dying. She was staying up with him and that. Why, she got hooked on it.

JB: How about Nell and Laura? Where did they get their dope?

Tape 1

NARRATOR: I don't know how they got the habit. Don't know when it ever stopped. That Laura, she made the most beautiful pajamas that you ever looked at! Hand embroidered with a sort of Chinese effect. Embroidered all up the side of those, the whole tunics. They were gorgeous!

JB: So that's one of the few cases you know of of dope being used in the West End in the '30s?

NARRATOR: Uh huh. Well, except Sody. Now our bartender . . .

JB: What was his name?

NARRATOR: Sody /George Washington/ Harris, and he was a person that had a personality that /made/ everybody love him. Everybody knew he was a dope friend, and everybody liked him /in spite of it/. Even the narcotics men that arrested him liked him. Keene and Kruse I think their name was. And they come one time to the tavern and they said, "Mick, we're going to have to take Sody and talk to him." Well, we thought they was arresting him, but what they done they took him over to old Hook school yard /northeast corner of 4th and Mulberry streets/. They told him, "We know you don't get nothin' out of this only a little before and a little after." For making the connection, see? So here come old Soda. It was right before Thanksgiving. They had let him out and brought him in. He said, "You know what them S.O.B.'s wanted? They wanted me to rat on everybody," he said. I'm not gonna do it." Well, he wouldn't.

But anyhow, finally around the corner there was a woman stayed with Kit Foster. And, oh, she was well set up. Her husband had got sent away for dope, and she stayed with Kit. She was gray-haired and very sedate looking and very fancy looking. So she come /to/ Sody. "My girl, my girl, my girl." I said, "Sody, who are you talking about?" He said . . . (What the hell was her name? Bedelia? Bedelia.) "My girl." I said, "Sody, get next to yourself." I said, "What in the hell would

NARRATOR: she want with you? I don't mean to insult you or anything, but you lost you eye" (he lost one eye from negligence after getting full of dope and not realizing he was losing it I gues). I said, "You don't have any money outside of your Spanish-American pension and what little bit you get around here. Now, what could she want with you?" /He said/, "Do you think that you're the only one that anybody wants?" I said, "No. I don't." But I said, "I just wonder what she wants with you. She either wants two things. She wants to send you to the penitentiary or get your pension. Now you make up your mind what she wants." (laughs) He got mad. He went up to number 9 /a beer joint/ and he went upstairs. /It was/ kind of a crumb joint up on North 3rd Street. He went upstairs and went to bed and stayed three days and come back; and he told Mick, he said, "Mike, do you care if I lay down on your sofa?" Back of the family room we had a leather couch. He said, "No, Sode. Go on. (laughs) You can go back there."

Pretty soon, here she come. "Is Soda here?" I said, "Yeah, he's back there." "Oh, Soda, where have you been? Those men want to see you." So he went out the door and he waved going out, you know. And I went like this; I said, "Make up your mind!" (laughs heartily)

So what happened (the story come out later because he had to laugh at himself how she suckered him in) he went down there and these fellows said, "We're tired of gettin' drunk. We've spent all the money we want gettin' drunk." (They were bootleggin' down there, see?) "We want to get straightened out. We want to get an ounce." Well, Sody said, "Give me your money, and I'll go get it for you." "Oh, no. Where our money goes, we go!" Well, finally they argued around enough, and ol' Sode, wanting a shot himself, see, so he said, "O.K. Come on."

So they drove and they went to 914 Spruce. Web Berry had it -- Web and Oney Berry. And what it was, it was the narcotics men that were the good

NARRATOR: fellas spending all the money. 'Sposed to be the iron workers. So old Soda had just got out from doing about ten years in prison. So when he went back, all those guys hollered, "Hey, Sode, what'd you bring? Five years?" He said, "No. Five other guys." (laughs) He took Ott McCall, Web Berry, Oney and Web, and himself -- five. So when he's up there, he start writin' back. I always wrote to him. I always liked poor ol' Sody. He was pathetic.

JB: When was that by the way? That he went off?

NARRATOR: That was in the '30s . . . late '20s and '30s.

So he wrote back. He said, "Well, you was right. I hate to admit it, but you were right." And such stuff, you know.

Well, when he come back -- when he got out -- Mag Morrison met him at the depot. Of course, while he was in there, she wrote to him, too. He had a uke /ukelele/. She played a uke, and he had one made for her there at the prison. All different kinds of wood inlaid with . . . oh, celluloid combs and stuff, you know. They utilize all that to make those things. She met him there.

Well, Mick said, "Sody, now you've got that money." (He had his Spanish-American War money that he couldn't spend while he was there.) He said, "You've got that money. Why don't you rent that place over on the alley and start your card room and straighten out?" "Well," he said, "I'm going to." He said, "There ain't nobody gonna /break me/." Well, the first thing you know all that money was gone. Ol' Sody's back on his fanny.

That's when this other episode started. I told you before. That was the aftermath of this. So he sat there and he didn't have no place to go or anything. He set on the rail, and he said -- he always called Mick, Mike -- he said, "Goddamit, Mike, you

Tape 1

NARRATOR: forced me to say it. I need a job and someplace to eat." He /Mick/ said, "O.K. Go ahead." And he let him tend bar.

So, we was going to St. Louis, and he put Ernie Adams upstairs with Sody to give him the cure -- cold turkey. When he come to, he was pretty weak but straightened out. So Mick said, "Why don't you go to your sister in Indianapolis?" So he went to his sister, and he died over there because he had been on that dope. He went on dope the year I was born I found out during our conversations. At one time he had been a big shot back in saloon days in his line over in Springfield, Illinois.

JB: What year then were you born so that he started . . .?

NARRATOR: Nineteen two /1902/.

The chorus girls would all go into his place, and he was smokin' hop back in those days. They say that's not habit-forming, but I think like marijuana it's habit-forming because you want something stronger as time goes on. All these people with their book learnin' don't have the actual experience that I know happens. They could talk to me all day /about dope and its affects/, and I wouldn't believe them.

So these girls would go by smokin' hop and one thing and another. Those hop smokers wouldn't have anything to do with a needle artist (they call 'em). So finally, Sody was in Terre Haute and he got sent to prison in this Donn Roberts scandal. Well, over in prison in Indianapolis he learned to use the needle. From then on, God, they tell me that he could take a block at a time and shoot it and just /was/ a glutton for it.

JB: What was the Donn Roberts scandal?

NARRATOR: A political scandal. Vote fraud. See he was

Tape 1

NARRATOR: mayor at one time, Donn Roberts.

JB: When was the scandal? When was that?

NARRATOR: I think around 1915, before my time. But we were standing by a cash register one time, Sode said . . . I said, "Sody, why don't you stop that damn dope. It don't do you any good. It takes your money and you look like hell. You're skinny as a rail, look like a scarecrow." I said, "Why don't you straighten up?" He said, "You see that?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "If I couldn't have another shot of dope in my life, I'd just take a razor and cut my throat."

And he was an entertainer! I want to tell you he could recite all the stuff that you don't hear now, like "The Face on the Barroom Floor" with gestures and "Ostler's Daughter" and "The Girl with the Blue Velvet Band." He'd just sit there one right after the other and never tire because he was full of that dope. He couldn't (laughing) get tired.

JB: You mentioned that closing the houses in . . .

NARRATOR: 'Forty-two.

JB: . . . in '42 was a wartime measure. How was that a wartime measure?

NARRATOR: They say that soldiers and things, if they go in a house, they're liable to tell secrets and stuff. That is my understanding of it. That's the way they closed up the first time. And if you remember, the great spy of World War I, Mata Hara, she was a dancer in a cafe, you know? Well, they claim that that stuff . . . and stuff does leak out in a house. You'd be surprised the stuff that people tell girls.

JB: You said that you closed down but the girls waited a little while and then came back again. How long was it before business was really open

Tape 1

JB: again but a little bit more quiet?

NARRATOR: Well, just a . . . nobody ever stops ringin' your door. I bet if the houses were still standing, they'd be beating on the doors.

JB: So the next week people were back?

NARRATOR: No, a month or two.

JB: And business continued really as usual except that it was just more hushed.

NARRATOR: Or sub rosa. Use the back door instead of the front door.

I used to be insulted if anybody wanted to come in my back door, but it got so we worked just the back door. They'd go down the alley and come in the back way.

JB: You mentioned the caste system among the houses. Would you describe that a little more?

NARRATOR: Well, there were some girls that worked at some houses that you wouldn't have in yours. They just weren't your type. They were drunks or dope fiends or too uncouth. I know one time a girl come to me (laughs) from Mississippi. I let her stay that night and the next day, and I fired her. She had the manners of a hog. She reached over the table with a fork like this (gestures to illustrate), gouged a potato I said, "Honey, where did you live in Mississippi?" (laughs) I said, "I can't use you." "Well, why?" I said, "I just can't." Her clothes, she didn't know how to put them on; she didn't know how to do nothing.

JB: So you required a certain kind of girl in your house?

NARRATOR: Or at least one you could teach how to act at a table and dress and one thing another. You didn't want no amateurs. It's not an amateur thing.

Tape 1

JB: How many different levels of houses were there in the West End?

NARRATOR: Oh, I'd say four.

JB: Four levels?

NARRATOR: Um hm.

JB: How would you describe each one?

NARRATOR: Well, I say that Kate Adair and Edith Brown and Jess Hartman and my house there (before I had it, Ella Duke had it; she died) and then Joan Lee . . . I would say they were the houses that were really up. Ours was the first ones that had running water in the rooms and had air-conditioning and whatnot.

JB: You were the best houses in 1925?

NARRATOR: Noooo, noooo, no-no. /All were bowl and pitcher joints then./ I'm talking about in the '40s when we all got closed up.

JB: In the '40s these were the best houses.

NARRATOR: Yeah.

JB: Which were the third-best houses?

NARRATOR: Well, you'd have to almost see 'em to visualize them. Some were just ordinary houses, but /In/ most /of the/ houses that I'm talking about the housekeeping was good. Then as you went down, it . . . just like ordinary people, just the same.

JB: So the housekeeping is what determined what level of a house you were and . . .

NARRATOR: The furnishings, the housekeeping, the intelligence of the girls, the wardrobe, their speaking ability Now we were always fortunate enough.

Tape 1

NARRATOR: We had a music room that . . . and a lot of the girls could play. I had one girl in particular, Marie Elliot, she had been a professional performer. She could play piano, organ, anything. I had another little girl, Sylvia. She'd a-been president if she'd been educated. She could (laughs) do anything.

JB: You said Marie Elliot played the piano in your house to entertain?

NARRATOR: Yeah. At different times I had . . . you know these old-fashioned square pianos? I had one of those in our music room, and in our "common" room I had a baby grand. Well, any of the customers -- a lot of them -- they'd sit there and entertain us. We used to have one fellow come from over at Marshall with Jimmie Jones -- you know, the author? I never heard anybody sing "On the Road to Mandalay" any better. He had a voice that could really put it out!

JB: And he studied with Jim Jones in Marshall, this man?

NARRATOR: He came with . . . Jimmie lived at Robinson and when he lived at the colony . . . you know they had a writing colony over there? Now, the fellow that wrote the story about the colony, he never was in my house. He always went . . . I know where he went, but when he described the house in his book, he did not tell the truth.

JB: Which house was he describing?

NARRATOR: He didn't mention the house, but it was Rose Moon's house. He said the bedspread and this and that . . . now Rose Moon had a nice house. And it was clean, and she was an excellent cook. But some way or other when they describe a house, the girls are always in a sleazy kimono and they are just unkempt and all that stuff. That's the description. That isn't so. That's maybe where their taste took them, but it wasn't really the norm.

Tape 1

JB: Did Jim Jones ever come to your house?

NARRATOR: Sure. We were good friends.

JB: You knew Jim Jones?

NARRATOR: He was an antiquer, too.

JB: What years was he coming to visit you?

NARRATOR: Oh, let's see. In the '50s. When he lived over there at the colony. When he first was writing his books.

JB: Now did he . . .

NARRATOR: And before he moved to France. He got married and moved to France. He's dead now, incidentally.

JB: Was he a customer in your house or just a . . .

NARRATOR: Shuuure. He said, "When I write my book, I'm going to have . . ." See, I always had a big library in my room. It was so . . . all those books . . . He mentioned it in something that he wrote. I never read all of his books 'cause they're not in my class really.

JB: He mentioned your library?

NARRATOR: Yeah.

This picture they had . . . another fellow I know that . . . very good friend, he saw the play /"Some Like It Hot?"/ in New York; and he said, "By God, I think part of it was took from your house." He said, "Looked just (laughing) like that room." I said, "Well, it's very possible."

JB: How frequently would Jim Jones come to your house?

NARRATOR: Oh, about once a week. Sometimes just come and talk. But everybody who come in wasn't

Tape 1

NARRATOR: business. /They'd/ come and talk. And we sold coke and played the jukebox and whatever. Just . . . everybody that come in the house wasn't a bed customer.

JB: They would just come to drink and talk?

NARRATOR: Talk, sure. A lot of people come just to talk. You'd be surprised the people that's been in my house. Not bed customers, just people -- friends.

JB: So some people would come regularly who were never a bed customer?

NARRATOR: That's right. And when you had a tavern, when the girls would approach anybody, you know, if I didn't want them to bother them, I'd just shake my head like that and they'd go on and leave them alone. There's a lot of people that wasn't . . . everybody /that/ went to the West End wasn't a bed customer. A lot of them went just to see what was going on. Human curiosity.

JB: What was Jim Jones like?

NARRATOR: Well, when he come back from California, he used to affect those tennis shoes and little tight (I call 'em jellybean pants) you know, jeans. He was a nice kid. He liked antiques. He built a house over in Robinson. I never got to see that. He was always going to take me over there. But he'd always tell me about his roses that he'd planted. I had the iron that come from the old Filbeck Hotel that was on the portico out in front. Do you remember?

JB: What do you mean the "iron"?

NARRATOR: Those iron posts that used to be out in front. Well, I had those layin' in my back /yard/. I was going to bring 'em out here and make a big rose arbor out of them. It never materialized, but any way, he wanted to buy 'em and I wouldn't let him

Tape 1

NARRATOR: have them. Then I had some stained glass that he wanted. But then he . . . I don't know why he left over at Robinson. He just give all that up. I think he went to New York. Then he married this girl, and they moved to France.

JB: Did he have a favorite girl at your house?

NARRATOR: No. We'd all get in there and talk. Just a whole bunch of us, just talk.

JB: You've referred what? You referred to "the plant" once at your place. What was "the plant"?

NARRATOR: Where you hide stuff.

JB: Was it a room?

NARRATOR: No. It was a contraption. You've seen a roller towel?

JB: Yes.

NARRATOR: O.K. The piece that it's mounted on is a piece of wood about a one by six, so long. Well, you fasten that up on one end, the other end you can pull out and raise it up and put it down. /You/ put the nail /in the other end in a large hole/ so it can be removed easily./

END OF SIDE 1

TAPE 1-SIDE 2

JB: So, the "plant" was something that looked a little like a roller towel?

NARRATOR: Like a bracket.

JB: And what did you keep in it?

NARRATOR: About three quarts of whisky in pint bottles because you could set them in there between the studs of the house, the wall. They had all sorts of unique ideas.

JB: Now, they were hidden there because it was Prohibition?

Tape 1-Side 2

NARRATOR: Um hm.

JB: Where was this "plant"?

NARRATOR: In the ladies' bathroom.

JB: How about now describing . . . let's see, your house and then your husband had a saloon next door? Is that right?

NARRATOR: This is where I'm talkin' about -- the saloon.

JB: It was in the saloon.

NARRATOR: And we lived next door.

JB: O.K.

NARRATOR: You know, that Prohibition, that's another stupid law that the do-gooders and the holier-than-thou's /It was one of/ the lousiest laws that were ever made. Kids that I went to school with -- the best of friends -- end up killing each other over whisky and money. The most idiotic law that was ever made! And then come back a few years later as if nothing happened. What did they expect those people to do that had saloons? /It was/ their only mode of making a living. Probably be two or three generations, some of those saloons /had been in existence./ Now what did they expect them to do? Just sit down and twiddle their thumbs and starve to death?

JB: Prohibition then would have been especially hard on the West End, right? Because there were so many saloons there.

NARRATOR: It was not only there -- everywhere! I wasn't in the West End in saloon days. But it was hard everywhere. See, I saw the results of it.

JB: When were the saloon days? What period of time was that?

Tape 1-Side 2

NARRATOR: That was a wartime measure, the first war. They closed up, I think, in 1918. I wasn't very interested in them then because I was only 16. And I never did drink so it didn't worry me any. But then the thing of it is, these laws . . . and some of those people that made those laws and voted dry were the biggest drunks that ever was. I think they was drunk and the next day sorry and voted dry 'cause they had felt so bad. And a lot of them had their hand out just the same.

JB: In your opinion, were there any advantages at all to Prohibition?

NARRATOR: No, I didn't see any. What did it do? Killed a lot of people. Sent a lot of people to the penitentiary because they took the money. That's only human weakness. Everybody's got their own price. I don't give a damn who they talk to. You talk to a man long enough and he's going to see your idea there. Naturally, they took the money. They probably had bills the same as everybody else and thought well, I'll take this. Maybe they didn't intend to take it the second time, but they did. They just don't need . . . if the people that belonged to the churches would take care of the church and practice what they preach

Now, I know one time I was the captain for the Community Chest in the West End. You know I'm kinda funny; I've got a lot of different interests. (laughs) And we were going to North Dakota that year so I told Mr. Grob (Rev. Theodore Grob) at the Goodwill, I said, "Mr. Grob, I can't work this year because we're going to be gone." So he put Major Bartsch of the Volunteers of America the head.

Well, when I come back, they said they hadn't really finished over there and would I finish it. So I called Major Bartsch and I said, "What didn't you finish?" "Well, (uneasy coughing) you know,

Tape 1-Side 2

NARRATOR: (resumes coughing) those places that (coughing) you could go that I couldn't go." I said, "Major Bartsch, I don't know of any place I could go that you couldn't go. Where were they?" /He said, / "Well, a (coughing) . . . you know them places." I said, "Oh! You mean the girls?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "I understand you. Their money's good enough, but they're not. Is that it?" "Well, I couldn't go get it," /he said/. I said, "O.K. I'll take care of it."

So I went to every door, and I rang the door-bell. I said, "If Community Chest comes wanting any money, do not give it to them because your money's good enough, honey, but you're not." And I also told Major Bartsch, I said, "Major, I don't know what Bible you're reading, but the one I read doesn't read the same as yours." He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Well, I remember reading, and it says that you were supposed to search the highways and the bi-ways and bring the sinner to the way of the cross. Does yours read like that?"

(Just above a whisper) Hypocrites! I've seen more honest-to-God human sympathy for people in that West End than I ever saw from 90% of the Christians. Just honest-to-God pureness of heart and I'd say it 'til I die. I wouldn't be in the business again for nothing on earth because . . . all the girls now from this high up know all about the ways of the world. Half of them are takin' birth control pills, and nine-tenths of their mothers are getting them. So, if you can show me where they've made it any better, I'll sure put in with you.

JB: Were there any particular periods of time when the churches were especially "down" on the West End?

NARRATOR: Oooh, yes! They were always "down" 'til they had tickets to sell for suppers or something. That's the first place they went to sell the tickets. Churches, or hospitals, the police ball. Hell, everybody come sellin' you something. Any other time, though, you wasn't no good.

JB: But were there . . . like was there a particular year, for example, when the churches decided: this year we're going to get the West End, and so they came after you?

NARRATOR: No. It's been whenever . . . well now, they had . . . that church at 13th and Chestnut. Brother _____, he's another hypocrite.

I had the back end of the tavern rented to this little Sylvia I talked about. I went back there to tell her something one day, and here's old Brother _____ with his arms around her, and I thought he was an octopus. "What the hell are you doing with him in here?" /She said,/ "Oh, he's a friend of mine, ain'tcha, Honey?" I said, "He is?" I said, "You know who he is?" "Shure. He comes to see me every Monday!" I said, "That explains it. He gets the money Sunday out of the collection plate, I guess." I said, "That's Brother _____." He run around the neighborhood with a little book, and he'd wait for some girl to rope him, and then he'd write down on his book Then he'd go to headquarters and tell them who roped him. I think that was his thing: to go get somebody to rope him and then run down and complain about them roping him.

JB: What does "roping" mean?

NARRATOR: Call them.

JB: Becon with your finger?

NARRATOR: Yes.

JB: What year was that that you caught Reverend _____ -- or Brother _____ -- and Sylvia together?

NARRATOR: That was in the late '30s.

Incidentally, he and his wife and boy got burned in a terrible accident. They got killed. His son was a little screwy. The girls used to torment him to death. /They'd/ tell him, "We know

NARRATOR: your father." He said, "Well, he didn't take all his clothes off." (laughing) Said, "Sure, he took all his clothes off." /We was only teasing; as far as I know, he never went so far as bed only a feeler.]

But he could get . . . he'd do his hands like that. He'd get rhythm out of his hands, and you could tell what he was playing. But anyway, they come to a terrible end.

JB: You mentioned a while ago that you didn't want any amateurs in your house. What were "amateurs"?

NARRATOR: Girls just starting out.

JB: Were there any problems with girls coming up from Kentucky and Tennessee who wanted to be in the business or who . . .

NARRATOR: Well, I'll tell you. In 45 years I had about a thousand girls, and they come from anyplace -- even one from Europe.

JB: A thousand different girls might have worked for you in 45 years?

NARRATOR: That's right, in 45 years.

JB: From what period of time to what period of time?

NARRATOR: Oh, from . . . well, this is before I come to Terre Haute. These girls didn't exactly work for me; they rented rooms from me. They would rent a room.

JB: And they might use it for business?

NARRATOR: Yeah. Well, that's the thing. They were streetwalkers. I'd rent the room to them. Just like motels and hotels do now. Same damn thing.

JB: So you would have started renting rooms to girls in what year?

Tape 1-Side 2

NARRATOR: Oh, about . . . 1922.

JB: Nineteen twenty-two until . . . about 1967?

NARRATOR: 'Seventy-two.

JB: Nineteen seventy-two. From 1922 to 1972 . . .

NARRATOR: That's right.

JB: . . . about 50 years.

NARRATOR: Um hm.

JB: Would you remind me again about how you got into the business.

NARRATOR: Oh, I dunno. I always liked . . . I suppose I liked excitement; liked to be around people -- dance and sing and always have a good time. Never did drink; never did smoke, but I just liked to be around people who was havin' a good time.

JB: Now, you mentioned, too, about how in some of your early jobs your employers felt that some sex on the side should go along with the job.

NARRATOR: Ooh, those jobs. They were wonders, yeah. (laughs) Mr. Cosulman, he thought for his big three dollars a week you should sleep with him. I was too dumb to know what the hell he's talking about.

Then, let's see. I forgot my job with Switzer's candy company. I quit that /in/ about two days. God, it was nailin' boxes, and you had to throw 'em. I couldn't do it!

And I had jobs -- all kind of jobs -- waiting table. Well, it's a known fact that if you waited table, the boss sure expected it after the second day -- to sleep with ya. So I lasted about three days. One day working, and one day the approach, and the third day fired. (laughs)

Tape 1-Side 2

NARRATOR: Then I got a job in a shoe factory. And I couldn't stand that; it was too noisy. That song was in vogue then, "Margie." And above "Margie" you'd hear some girl screaming with her finger -- a needle in her finger or something. Too nerve-racking.

I guess you'd say I was kind of a thrill-seeker. I don't know. I just wanted to go and see everything and do everything, just stand on the fringe and watch what's going on (laughs), I guess.

JB: So how did you get then from all those different jobs to renting rooms in a house?

NARRATOR: Well, it was easy! I figured out that's what people's going to do, so I just rent them a room and let them do it!

JB: And so, in 1922 you had your first house that you rented rooms to girls?

NARRATOR: Um hm. Then as you go along, you find out what's going on. Just like any business, the customers teach you the business.

JB: And what did the customers teach you then when you first got your house?

NARRATOR: They taught you that if they rang your doorbell, they was going to pay you for usin' that room. And they never used it over 15 minutes. So that's pretty fast money.

Same as the motels are doing today. The hotels are doing the same thing. And I think that's the reason they closed the houses because when the Internal Revenue started finding out how much money was being changed hands, it got to be big business. Before that, it was just kinda something on the sidelines. But after they got figuring out . . . just like when they audited us that time, they had one little agent (I don't know; I think he was a Greek), and he was very indignant because people

Tape 1-Side 2

NARRATOR: like me made more money than people that went to college and one thing another. And I said, "Well, I can't help it because you went to college."

JB: What year was that that he was auditing you?

NARRATOR: That was in the '50s. I said, "Well, I can't help it. You can get in the business if you want to. I'm not stopping you."

JB: When did you . . . or how did you happen to come to Terre Haute?

NARRATOR: Well, my mother had died, and I had a friend that was going to Detroit to collect alimony she had coming. So I went with her. That was in 1925. So we went through Terre Haute, and I really thought Terre Haute was something. We come over that grade (they called it the grade back in those days) and saw those big sycamore trees and, of course, the streetcar run along the side of it. It was a narrow road, but it was real pretty back in those days. And when we come to Terre Haute, we made a left turn, and we happened to go on 2nd Street. Everybody had a music . . . not a music box but an electric piano going; everybody had a different tune. Everything was real lively. So I thought, well, I kinda like this. (laughs)

So, we went to Detroit and on the way back we stopped again. So I told Rose, I said, "I'm going to live there someday. I like that town." So that's how I come to Terre Haute.

JB: Where did you begin business in Terre Haute?

NARRATOR: Well, that's a . . . you know to get in business in Terre Haute was quite an item. I got a house from Jack Hines, and I rented it. There was a big uproar about a stranger coming in town, renting a house, so I couldn't get it.

JB: What was the address of that house?

Tape 1-Side 2

NARRATOR: Let's see. That was below Edith Brown's there, 200 and something. It was a double house.

JB: Two hundred something on what street?

NARRATOR: It wasn't even number . . . it was two . . . I don't remember the address. It was a double house on the west side of the street, just below Brown's.

JB: On the west side of what street?

NARRATOR: Second, between Eagle and /Mulberry/ . . . what in the devil was that address?

Well, anyhow, then I went over on 9th Street and rented a house, one of the cottages, Brinkman cottage. Well, that old man about drove me crazy. Your door would open and in would come Mr. Brinkman. "Did you want something, Mr. Brinkman?" /He would say, / "No. I used to live here so long," (he talked broken German) " . . . lived here so long, I just come, I look around." He had the ceilings painted like they used to have back in Civil War days. Might have been there from then on, I don't know. He'd look around with his hands behind him and go away. That might happen four or five times a day. I don't give a durn what you was doin' in come Mr. Brinkman!

So I went back down to Hines, and I said, "I want that house." /He said, / "Well, what's the matter . . . why didn't you take it the first time?" I said, "Well," I said, "/they/ wouldn't let me have it." And I told him who wouldn't leave me have it, and he said, "I don't believe it."

JB: Who was it?

NARRATOR: It was my husband's ex-wife.

JB: What was her name?

NARRATOR: Dot Clark.

Tape 1-Side 2

NARRATOR: He said, "Who wouldn't let you have it?" And I said, "Well, she just raised so much hell about it that I couldn't have it." /He said, / "I don't believe it." So I said, "O.K." There was another woman there and I don't know who she was, but someday I'll prove it to you."

So, oh, some time after that, Hinesy and I were talking and I repeated what I said. I said there was some woman there, and I can't remember who it was. I don't remember faces very well anyway. So this woman spoke up. She said, "It was me. That was before I moved to Chicago." I said, "That's right. It was you. You come to say that you were moving to Chicago." And that was the only time I'd ever met her -- the reason I didn't remember her.

JB: This was "Dot"?

NARRATOR: No. This was Alice Hastings that was in the house telling that. So then he was satisfied I was telling the truth.

I never did lie. I told a lot of stuff I shouldn't have told, but I never did lie. But then I got that house, and I'll tell you it was an up-hill drive. 'Cause the oldtimers were strictly against you.

JB. What oldtimers?

NARRATOR: The ones that had been there before you.

JB: The ones in the West End . . .

NARRATOR: Oh, yeah.

JB: . . . who had been there before you didn't want an outsider . . .

NARRATOR: That's right.

JB: So how was it an uphill drive? What happened to make it hard?

NARRATOR: Well, you just had to keep on pluggin'. Just (laughs) go. You didn't just walk right in and say, "Here it is." That ain't the way it was done.

JB: Did they try to keep business from coming your way?

NARRATOR: Tried to keep business comin' from your way; trying to keep you from getting any decent looking girls; try . . . just little nibby things.

JB: They didn't want competition?

NARRATOR: Just didn't want you there. That's right; they didn't want any competition.

JB: How long did it take for you to get accepted?

NARRATOR: Oh, I'd say, about ten years.

JB: That'd be like 1935?

NARRATOR: Oh, no, 'long about . . . yeah, '33, '30 -- somewhere along in there.

JB: And did the other house owners not accept you until then? So Edith Brown . . .

NARRATOR: Oh, Brown and I, we were always friends.

JB: Who was it? Which ones were especially . . . made it especially difficult for you?

NARRATOR: The only people I was ever friendly with down there was Edith Brown and Mrs. McGinty, Rita Smith's mother.

JB: That was Mrs. McGinty?

NARRATOR: Um hm. /Her/ name was Hutchison, but they always called him McGinty so we called her "Mrs. Mac." But those were the only people that I was ever really friendly with.

Tape 1-Side 2

JB: The others never really accepted you?

NARRATOR: No. They always said I was bigheaded and stuck up and all kinds of stuff. But we didn't have anything in common outside the business. I didn't drink and I didn't smoke and I didn't carouse around. There was no reason for me to be real buddy with them. The girls in the house was our . . . just my friends. Whoever was in the house, we lived like a large family. The only thing disrupted us was when a customer come in. If we had the money, we wouldn'ta (laughing) been bothered with them. But when they would come in, somebody'd disappear upstairs. What they done, you didn't know. I couldn't swear to it, but I had a damned good idea.

 But we'd sew. We'd play the piano. One girl played a violin, another one played a saxophone, whatever we felt like doing. We'd say, "Well, play the piano for us," or "sing for us," or a lot of times they'd have me to read to them at night. When they'd be sitting around, they'd say, "Well, read to us." I'd sit there and read to 'em and that's the way we'd pass our time.

JB: So a lot of the entertainment in your home was musical?

NARRATOR: Um hm. We had a lot of music. We had a lot of reading. We had a lot of sewing, crochet.

 I had a girl to come one time, and she said, "Do you think I could rent a Singer sewing machine?" And I said, "Well, I guess so," and I called up Singer. The man come down, and he said he'd rent it to her if I'd stand good for it. And I /~~did~~/ 'cause she didn't have any credit or anything. I said, "O.K." She set it on the end of our dining room table, and I want to tell you that girl made herself the most gorgeous wardrobe that you ever looked at. That's when straight-line skirts /were/ in. Well, she might pay \$25 for the material and make herself . . . all her clothes were tailored

NARRATOR: beautifully.

When she got that wardrobe done, she was gone. And I always had an idea that that girl come out of prison somewhere because . . . she was a pretty girl. And she made those clothes, and she looked like a million dollars in 'em. She said, "Well, I'm going to leave. I'm going to send this machine back tomorrow, and I'm going to go." I said, "Well, O.K. Good luck."

JB: You weren't angry with her for . . .

NARRATOR: Why, no. Why would you be angry? I'd always tell 'em, "You walked in like a lady; walk out like one! You don't need to sneak off." A lot of them did. If they owed you or something, (laughs) they always sneaked off (continuing to laugh).

Miss Tucker, you know, I always told her, "Now do not sell those two girls any clothes, or no jewelry. I don't know them, they haven't been here very long, and they're too" Whenever you see two girls whispering, you know, forget it. So, she come /one day to/ the side of the building. Mick and I /were/ standing out in front of the tavern. She was kind of cute. She had a pencil. She said, "I expect I done something that'll make you angry." I said, "What did you do, Miss Tucker?" She said, "Why I sold those two girls just a lovely order." It was right before Easter.

JB: A lovely what?

NARRATOR: Order.

JB: Order.

NARRATOR: (laughs) They got all dolled up for Easter.

I said, "Well, I wish you hadn't of done that." "Well," she said, "that's a pretty good order. I sold 'em everything from the skin out." Just expensive stuff. They took off.

Tape 1-Side 2

NARRATOR: She /Miss Tucker/ come on a Wednesday. She said, "Where's Frances and Vivian?" I said, "They're where I told you they would go." She said, "Where's that?" I said, "I told you they wouldn't pay you, Miss Tucker. I didn't know those girls." And they didn't pay her.

JB: When was that? Around what time?

NARRATOR: That was after . . . that was probably in the '40s.

JB: You mentioned that you would read in the evenings. What would you read to them?

NARRATOR: Oh, a lot of books, different things. A lot of them . . . personally I like . . . if I'm reading something light, I like historical novels. /I'd/ read that. /I/ had quite a library back in those days before it all got destroyed. I'm still sortin' 'em out. And I tell you it really makes me sick when I take them out and throw them in that ash pit out there and burn them up. I've got some by Eugene . . . those old novels by Eugene Sue. I've saved a couple of those, and I was wondering if I couldn't find somebody to just take 'em for the illustrations -- like to color them, you know. They're all in black and white. And the books are ruined; they're not good.

Now, my books on Ireland, a lot of them are destroyed, but I'm trying to keep 'em because some of 'em are recent and books are expensive.

JB: So you had one room in your house that was a library?

NARRATOR: This big general room that we used we had bookcases in there that held about a thousand books.

JB: Was that the "common room"?

NARRATOR: Uh huh. And our piano.

And then the girls would sit around there and

NARRATOR: sew and /do/ whatever we wanted to do.

JB: Now, what address is this house that we're talking about?

NARRATOR: Two /hundred/ fourteen Cherry.

JB: Two fourteen Cherry?

NARRATOR: Uh huh.

You know one time I went over to the Goodwill, and I got a hundred-pound bale of ladies' suits for the wool. Well, I never knew how much a hundred pounds was. I dragged that up (laughing) in that living room, and I cut the wire (laughs heartily), and it just fell all over the room!

Well, we got busy, and we took all the buttons and stuff out, and we reduced it to carpet rags. And we had two machines. And you'd be surprised how many customers would come and help sew those carpet rags. So we sewed those and made the rugs that was in the Dresser home -- one great big one and two small ones. I still got a couple of small ones around here. We braided those, and I sewed them together. And we're all sitting in the middle of the floor, and pretty soon Peg looked up. She said, "You know, this is not a whorehouse; this is a goddam girls' school." She said, "All we do is work." (laughs heartily)

I said, "Well, just think how pretty they're going to be when we get them done." (continues laughing)

JB: When was this that you made these rugs?

NARRATOR: Well, I was makin' them for my house which I never got to live in it ('bout two hundred miles from here down in the country), but it doesn't matter now. So I didn't have any use for the rugs after I had them made. And they needed some rugs over at the Dresser Home, so I gave them to them.

JB: So these rugs that you and your girls and customers made are now in the Dresser . . .

NARRATOR: No. They were there. And I'll tell you where I saw 'em the last time was in the basement at the Goodwill. And the great big one, some colored woman was lookin' at, and it had ripped a few places. And I said, "That's a good rug. It's all wool." And it was all stitched on a machine. There wasn't a raw seam in it. It was all turned and then one row of stitching down before it was braided. She said, "How do you know?" I said, "Because I helped make it." I said, "It's all wool."

JB: What year was it now that you and your girls made that rug?

NARRATOR: It would be in the '50s.

JB: And when was it that you last saw it at Goodwill?

NARRATOR: Oh, in the last few years. I don't know; whenever they renovated down there. I haven't been down there for a long time, but it was really comical making those rugs. All that pile of junk in the middle of the floor.

JB: Would you describe the first floor of your 214 Cherry Street house?

NARRATOR: Oh, I just loved that house. I can remember almost every brick in it.

As you went in the front door (it had leaded glass on both sides), the lights on the sides were leaded glass -- white -- and an oval-shaped door. The storm doors on it come from the old Minshall mansion. They were oak. They were the storm doors. And in the iron was "M" for the Minshall. So I just put them up which they just fitted.

JB: Where had the Minshall mansion been?

NARRATOR: Where the gas company is now.

NARRATOR:

So as you went in on your right (there was the stairway on the left), /you could/ go back to our common room. On the right was two rooms. The second room was our music room. As you went back it was our common room, a big, large room. In its day . . . I think when Ella Duke had it, they called it the dance hall. They danced back there. It had a hardwood floor, but I always used it as a big living room. Then as you turned to the left from that room, you went into the kitchen and you continued to the left and you went into the dining room and the left brought you back to the hall /and/ the stairway. At the foot of the stairway there was another room. Well, we had those all as parlors. You know, privacy for someone didn't want to be seen. We'd put in one of those. Then up the stairway to your right was number one, the big hall, two, three, four, and five, and a stool and a bathroom, and then my room, which was an extra-large room, and my bath. We had big closets. Anytime I think of that house I could just sit down and cry. The only house I ever lived in that give me a wrench to leave. I told them, I said . . . I had three houses down there -- 125 and 210 and 214 . . .

JB:

All on Cherry?

NARRATOR:

They were mine. They rented . . . I lived in 210 /Cherry/ at this time when the Urban Renewal took it. I lived there myself, but the house was next door. And 125 /North 2nd Street/ I had rented to someone.

And I said, "Don't give me any money; just move my houses out on my ground. Don't give me anything; just move them." /They said,/ "Oh, we couldn't do that. It's too much bother. We'd have to go to Chicago." "Well, I can't figure out what Chicago's got to do with Terre Haute. It's almost broke and the most broken-down lookin' place you've ever seen. I don't know why they should tell us what to do!"

But anyway, my houses got wrecked.

JB: How many years now did you own those three houses?

NARRATOR. Well, that 125 I didn't own so long.

JB: When did you buy it?

NARRATOR: I don't remember. I'm not good on dates. I tell you how I got it. Ethel Shipley was broke. The bank was ready to take it away from her. So I told her, I said, "Ethel, I'll take it over, and you can stay there for as long as you live for \$40 a month which will pay the insurance and the taxes (at that time)." "Oh, O.K.," /she said/. Well, anyway, we had to go through court to get it turned over to us. You'd go there, knock on the door; she wouldn't answer it. In 29 months she had given me \$140. Well, I couldn't afford to keep her. So I told her, I said, "Ethel, you're going to have to give me the money or get out." Well, she got an idea that she'd let Rose Moon go down there and start up.

So, Rose went in and papered the house and done this and that and the other and I said, "Rose, I appreciate you fixing my house, but it" /She said, / "Well, it's not your house; it's Ethel's house!" I said, "Move in it and find out whose house it is." So she sent a lawyer out here to give me my money. I forget who he was. He said, "I guess you know why I'm here." I said, "No. I don't." He said, "Well, I want to offer you this money. Mrs. Moon wants to give you this money." I said, "I don't want Mrs. Moon's money. I've no dealing with Mrs. Moon. My dealings is with Mrs. Shipley." He said, "Well, I had to offer it to you, but I don't blame you." I said, "Well, O.K. Just so we understand each other."

And Ethel had gone kinda off her base. She got so that no girl would stay with her because she'd take the food that was left over and wrap it up and hide it in the basement. That house was walking with cockroaches. Well, of course, Rose Moon had pity on her, and she took her in and

NARRATOR: moved all that stuff in her garage. Rose's house-keeper come down, and I said, "For godsake, tell Rose to get an exterminator on that stuff because she will be literally ate up with cockroaches." You could walk across the floor. Hundreds of 'em, just steppin' on 'em!

And at first she put her head up in the air. Of course, I was abusing her. I was abusing her so bad, you know. But finally, they done the same thing. They couldn't stand all the cockroaches and all of this mental condition of hers so that ended that. So I guess I ended up not so bad there either.

JB: When did you get "210"? Do you remember about when?

NARRATOR: I got that in the '50s.

JB: In the '50s. And how about "214"?

NARRATOR: I got that in the '40s.

JB: In the '40s.

NARRATOR: Um hm.

JB: So you were in the Hines house . . .

NARRATOR: No, no.

JB: . . . earlier?

NARRATOR: Oh, yeah, I was there in '27, but then I moved over to 300 North . . . to 226 Eagle.

JB: Two twenty-six Eagle from the Hines house?

NARRATOR: And, of course, 226 Eagle and 300 North 3rd was side-by-side, which was the bootlegging joint and the house. We always lived in the house. The girls didn't live in the house. They lived over there /300 North 3rd/.

Tape 1-Side 2

NARRATOR: So then I think that's what really made everybody hate me is when I got "214." Everybody wanted the house because it was a house that had a reputation, a high-class house. In my time, I'd always seen it locked up and closed up 'cause Ella had died.

So the doctor told me I was staying in too much and that I should get some exercise. I said O.K. So Mick said, "Well, find a house and we'll move out of this neighborhood." Well, I didn't want to move out of the neighborhood. Didn't want to move when they made me move! So wherever we'd find a house, I didn't like it or something. So finally, somebody said, "Did you ever look at Ella Duke's house?" And I said, "No, I didn't." So I went up, and I took a look at Ella Duke's house -- nice big two-story brick house, square built, hard brick. So I went to Terre Haute Savings Bank, and I asked Mr. Nick Filbeck for the keys (it was during the Depression, you know). He gave me the keys, and I went down and looked at 214. When I got to Shandy's there at 3rd and Wabash, I called up my cook. I said, "Val, meet me at 2nd and Cherry and don't tell anybody where you're going. Just walk out."

So she walked out, and we opened the doors. And Del Gage, he was an old character. He had a bunch of dogs and stuff, and he had lived over the garage there at 214. But there were all kind of dogs, straw on the floor about yai high. Everytime he needed clean sheets -- you know where the dogs went -- he just put more straw on there. He slept with all them dogs! The bank didn't know that. So I went . . . I was opening the door, and Del said, "What are you doing there?" He said, "I'm the custodian of this house." I said, "I'm looking at the house, Del." And I said, "Incidentally, if I buy the house," I said, "you're going to have to take those dogs out of that garage. Upstairs there." You could smell them from here across the road.

Tape 1-Side 2

NARRATOR: So as I went in, you had to cut those spider webs. It had big thick spider webs. You had to go through them like a curtain. And I liked it. It had this old-fashioned oatmeal wallpaper on it, one thing another. Now, I didn't buy it for a house; I just bought it to live in, but it was a big house. So, I said, "I like this house." Val said, "Well, I do, too." Mick had gone with Ray Thomas to Tennessee to get a Tennessee walking horse. When he come back, I said, "I found a house." He said, "Where?" I said, "214 Cherry." He said, "Goddammit, I told you I didn't want any house down here!" I said, "I'll tell you what, Mick. I'll give you the keys, and you go up there and you look at it. And if you don't like the house, we won't take it." And I knew he'd love it.

I went with him. He went up there, and he went up to the second hall. And he didn't say, "Well, O.K." He said, "Well, if you want it, O.K." I said, "I want it." So I went up to the bank, and I talked to Mr. Filbeck. I said, "How much would I have to have?" /He said, / "Only 200 dollars" for the mortgage. See, in the estate (and they were all fightin' over it) I needed \$200, and he would carry the mortgage. He said, "Here's the keys." I said, "O.K. I'll bring you the \$200 Monday."

Well, I could rake up all but two dollars of the \$200. And Tom Dallas, he used to be pretty well set politically here. He was a jailer and one thing another. At that time he was bartending for us for a place to eat and sleep during the Depression. So, he went up to the courthouse and borrowed the \$2.

So I took the money up to Mr. Filbeck, and I had to pay \$40 a month. Well, Mick, he always traveled around in the summer with the rodeo. So he was gone. It was on a Fourth of July, and Laura (this girl I told you about before) she said, "You know it's an awful bum day. Why don't we go up to the house and just spend the day up there." We used to go up to Goodman's and get delicatessan and stuff, and I said, "O.K."

NARRATOR: Well, when we got there, we was sittin' on the steps and my God, business started comin' in like that! Nobody wantin' any business! She said, "Is it all right?" And I said, "Well, sure, it's (laughs) all right! Go on!" So when we closed up that night, she said, "You know this is better than we do down at the corner." I said, "Yes, it is and you know what we're going to do? We're going to stay here." (laughs) So, I told Mick, I said, "Laura and I are gonna stay up at the house. We're not going to come down here any more." "I thought you bought it to live in it!" I said, "I did, but I'm going up there. It's better instead of staying down here /superior to 300 in a hundred ways/."

JB: People preferred to come to that house?
Customers preferred to go to 214?

NARRATOR: No. But it was the first house on the line. First stop. Just first house. Right there. Oh, they went everywhere. Listen, a lot of landladies had the idea that because they went to their house they wouldn't go nowhere else. Like Joan Lee she thought everybody went to her house which was beautiful. It was all in this gilt, Louis XIV, XV, whatever it is, you know, and oriental rugs and all that she'd brought here from Cleveland with her. It was gorgeous. But she thought nobody'd ever go to anybody else's house after they'd been to hers. She didn't know how wrong she was!

And there was one fella that wandered around down there /who/ always spent a terrible amount of money. Danville Jack. He come from over in Danville. Well, to get from the alley over to her house, 210 then (her house was in the middle), they had to go back of our fence to get into her yard. She don't know how many times he come back of that fence up our back steps. One time she caught him, you know, going in there. And she said (it was in wartime) she said, "I feed him all of my steaks and everything and he goes to your house." I said, "I don't have to feed him, Joan. He just comes here 'cause he likes us."

JB: What year was it that you bought this "214" house?

NARRATOR: Nineteen forty.

JB: Nineteen forty you bought it?

NARRATOR: Um hm.

That man that built that house . . . that was the best built house down there. They said it took longer to knock it down than any of them. It was all brick. Each room had a mammoth closet and, of course, I put running water in all the rooms after I got the house and air conditioners. It was just . . . every room was an outside room except the dining room. You had to go from the kitchen to the dining room or from the front parlor there into the dining room. But every room was an outside room. And we used to stay up all day and all night. And we had these sliding screens at the dining room window. Somebody'd slide that screen, "Anybody up? Get the coffee pot on. I'm comin' in." Six o'clock in the morning, whenever, "come on in; it's all right."

JB: So your house was really open 24 hours a day for people to come and go whenever they wanted?

NARRATOR: Anytime they want to come in, come on in. Somebody was always up.

JB: And they might not be bed customers . . .

NARRATOR: That's right. Just want a cup of coffee and conversation.

JB: Did you charge them for coffee and conversation?

NARRATOR: Nooooooo. Sometimes they'd bring a bottle with them. Our dining room was a great place for drinking, you know. Or they'd play cards in there. The girls and them, drink and play cards, party all night. Didn't make any difference. Nobody charged

NARRATOR. them anything for it. They were just all having a good time. And in between that, we made money.
(laughs)

JB: In between what?

NARRATOR: All the cardplaying and all that stuff. Somebody'd disappear. Well, somebody'd take their hand. I don't play cards either, but I've watched them all.

JB: So bed customers didn't come just between eleven at night and four in the morning. They came 24 hours a day.

NARRATOR: Whenever they wanted to. Whenever the notion struck 'em.

JB: What kind of girls brought you the best business?

NARRATOR. Now, that you can't never say because she might be as ugly as a scarecrow and make the most money with her personality.

JB: What kind of personality worked best?

NARRATOR: Well, just . . . now for instance, I had one girl that could tell jokes -- good, bad and indifferent -- 24 hours a day and never repeat herself. She was a good conversationalist. And I had another girl damned near got me killed. She was pretty. Looked like Marilyn Monroe and copied that walk and that voice, and she damned near got me killed. That guy backed me up against the wall until my stomach was as black as the ground -- black and blue -- and I couldn't think. I read this before that if you turn sideways, the bullet don't go through you, you know. I couldn't think! I've heard people say, "Oh, my whole life come afore me!" I must not of had any life because nothing come but blank. Just stopped. And what saved me was, she come off the stairway and as she went behind him, her evening . . . she had a long evening gown on /and/ it brushed against him. He

NARRATOR: felt it and he thought she went out the kitchen door, but she went behind the dining room door. We had one of those . . . not revolving but push doors.

END OF TAPE

TAPE 2-SIDE 1

NARRATOR: He become scared not finding her so he run and he jumped out the back door.

He was a bloomin' idiot. His thing was goin' around, picking up women off the street, saying he was One woman in particular, she was pregnant and he said, "Oh, you shouldn't be out this late at night alone! I'm a federal officer" -- police officer or something -- and "I'll take you home so you're safe." He took her and he raped her! Well, that went on . . . he finally got caught. A colored girl caught him. He went in there, his thing was goin' in these houses and not paying these girls. So this colored girl, she said, "Honey, I don't mind goin' to bed with you for nothing, I just don't want the police to catch you goin' out." But she's there getting the number off his car, and she remembered it. That's how they caught him.

Well, then the military come. He was in the reserves. The military come and wanted me to go to Chicago to prosecute him, and I wouldn't do it. Why, they wouldn't be tryin' him, they'd be trying me! I would be the wicked ol' witch that had the House. They wouldn't try him. I said, "Why, no! I don't care what you do with him, but I'm not going."

And they say how mean you treat the girls. The girls weren't treated mean unless they treated you mean. You took half their money, that's true. But if they got sick, you was also stuck with 'em. You have to stand good for their bills and stuff. If anything happened to them, you had to pay their

Tape 2

NARRATOR: fine. They had a place to eat and sleep regardless if they made a nickel. And a lot of 'em wasn't top notchers. You just kept them to fill in, to talk while somebody else made the money. So I can't see any harm in that really because

Now, I did hear . . . not in Terre Haute . . . but this Laura I talked about, she was from Chicago. She had worked for Al Capone when he was Al Brown. Now, I can't swear to this 'cause I wasn't there and I don't know only what she told me. But you had to send your clothes to the cleaners that they recommended, which was in their category, and it was outrageous price. You had to send your laundry where they told you. You had to buy pomegranate potash from them, which all the girls used for hygiene purpose. He charged 40 cents for a milk bottle -- quart milk bottle -- full. Well, my God, for a dime you could make 50 milk bottles full. But 40 cents, did I say? I'm lyin'. Dollar forty cents! And all such stuff as that.

Now, like I say, I can't swear to that, but they put up with awful conditions. But now, if you read that Literary Digest there that I just gave you, you will see far more vicious things. There's a nigger in there, black as coal, with a white girl. He was traveled all over Canada and Europe and one thing another. I think that's worse than a girl in a house. A girl in a house had some protection.

JB: You say now that the girls paid you half of what they earned?

NARRATOR: That's right.

JB: How much could they earn? And, for example, you know, in '25 when you started in Terre Haute, how much were they earning? How much were they earning in the '30s, '40s?

NARRATOR: Well, in the '40s they'd be making -- the '40s, let me see -- \$25, \$30 a day for their in.

Tape 2

JB: For their what?

NARRATOR: For their "in." For their part.

JB: So you would get \$30, and they would get \$30?

NARRATOR: That's right, but out of my \$30 I provided the food, all the overhead and the maids, the laundry. I had one of those first washers that come out. And they never were restricted on their linens. In fact their restrictions were very little. They could go in the kitchen -- a lot of them were good cooks -- go in the kitchen and do anything you want to. If you want to make a pie, make it. If you want to make a cake, go ahead and do it. I don't care. Go ahead.

JB: And they could change the linens as often as they wanted?

NARRATOR: Yeah. Use as many towels as they wanted. In my house. Some houses you were only allowed one towel. Well, I can't see where one towel's going to do you any good.

JB: Did they go by their own names?

NARRATOR: Nooo. For godssake, and you never did know where they come from half the time. The only time you'd ever get the truth out of a girl would be some evening just about sundown, they'd be sittin' in that window at 214 facin' the west. They'd start reminiscing out loud. You got more truth accidentally than you ever tried to get on purpose. /They would/ just sit there in that rocking chair and rock and just start talkin' to you, you know, just very nonchalantly telling you the whole works. You'd be surprised how many girls' mother or father come and got their money, brothers. How many girls kept their families. How many of 'em had a no-good pimp hangin' on 'em which I never could figure out. I never could figure out why you should lay down with a dozen men to give one man your money. Now, that don't make no sense to me.

Tape 2

JB: The girls in your house might also have a pimp?

NARRATOR: Not around me. But they would have 'em. On their time off, that's where they'd go, wherever they went. No, I never had any pimps around me. But I never could figure that out.

JB: So they might let a pimp manage their day off?

NARRATOR: On their time off they went . . . I had one girl once upon a time. She had one dress that she traveled in and a hat and a suitcase and a nightgown or something in it. That's all she had. And he was on that telephone every minute. I told her, I said, "Listen, I don't want these telephone calls. I'm not callin' you to the telephone." If you wouldn't call her to the telephone right now, why he was on to her.

 Sooo, I sent her to the doctor; well, she didn't go to the doctor. She said she did, and I called the doctor 'cause he didn't give her a certificate. He said, "Well, she never come here." Well, whatever his name was /the pimp/. . . "I do all that when I go home." /I said, / "I don't want an out-of-town doctor's certificate on my wall. I want local doctors that they could check on."

 And then I found out she didn't have any clothes. The maid told me she didn't have any clothes only that travelin' dress and no underwear or nothing! I said, "What if something would happen to you -- an accident or something. You've got no clothes on!" "Well, he don't want . . ." I said, "Oh."

 Well anyway, I nearly got caught with her. That's when we was closed up. And I'm sitting over in Edith Brown's window, and I saw . . . all the rookie cops, they used to put them up and down, you know, to entrap somebody - entrapment. So I

NARRATOR: said, "Edith, there's something wrong up at my house." She said, "How can you tell?" I said, "Well, you see that squad car? They just let that fellow out in khaki clothes. I don't know who he was. Then he come down and he got into it again." I said, "There's something wrong. So I'm going home." She said, "Oh, don't go home." I said, "I'm going home. I'll be back if there's nothin' wrong."

So when I got up there the housekeeper, she said . . . I told her not to answer the door while I was gone. If I was gone all day, don't answer the door until I come back. Well, she answered the door. "Can't leave you in 'til the landlady comes home." So Katie told me what happened and just then a knock come on the door. It was Grace Fortune, a girl that had been pretty well up in her time. But she was down because when she was in the hospital, they got her hooked on dope and she was a pushcart girl then. She said, "Did you see what happened to the fella that just left your house?" I said, "No." She said, "Squad car picked him up." I said, "Thank you, Grace." I shut the door. I said, "Get your things and get outta here."

So we owned a farm up the road here then. I called a fellow I knew. I said, "Take her out there to the farm and leave her there."

So pretty soon here come the police with warrants, beatin' on my door. Looked like they was lookin' for Jesse James. And they didn't have to do that! All they had to do was call up and say they want you at headquarters, if they wanted you. But anyway, beating on the door, and I let them in. And I said, "What is it you want?" They said, "We want in. It's the police. We want in." I said, "I see it is. Well, what the hell you lookin' for?" There must have been eight of 'em. I said, "Have you got anything to bring you in?" He said, "We've got warrants." And he had . . . people wasn't even there. I said, "O.K. Come on in." By that time I'd got rid of her.

NARRATOR: And there was a man that roomed upstairs. This was during the war, and I just had one girl and some roomers. And he was in the kitchen eating a piece of watermelon. He said warrants this, that, and the other. I said, "I'm the only one that's here that you've got a warrant for." "We're gonna search the house." I said, "Search it. I don't care." But before that I'd gone in her room and got all of her stuff together in a suitcase and shipped it out, too. So there was nobody there. But I knew that was at my house when I saw them up and down that alley. I just knew it. So I got rid of her. She was very insulted because I made her leave. I said, "What would you want to do -- sit there and be arrested? Would that be better?"

JB: You mentioned "entrapment." How did entrapment work?

NARRATOR: Well, if I would come to your door . . . if I'm a policeman and I come to your door like a working man and talk my way in and I arrest you, that is entrapment, which they're very well noted for. That last raid that they had when Leland Larrison and the police fell out, that was entrapment.

JB: When was that raid?

NARRATOR: Well, that was in the '70s. That was the last house I had, incidentally, there on 5th Street when I had those flats.

I was . . . let's see, I was downstairs, but the night maid opened the door and in come four or five men all in white shirts. The Yellow Cab brought . . . she said the Yellow Cab had them. And she let them in. And I said, "Is there a convention? All of you in white shirts." I didn't recognize none of 'em. They said, "No convention." Then the fella on the other side rang, and someone come in. And pretty soon here come a fellow with Mae by the arm, and I started laughing. I said, "What, are you afraid she'll run away?" He said, "I'm a police officer. I'm a police officer."

NARRATOR: Under arrest." I said, "Well, you don't need to hold on to her. She'll be here."

So they arrested us; took us down. And it was Michele's fault. She's another one of those pretty girls. She had a college kid that she was stuck on. We'd a never got in trouble if it wasn't for her. And she's keepin' him in there talkin' to him when he should have been out of there and gone. And he got two boys in trouble that shouldn't have been in trouble. They were only waiting for him. And she was pretty. But all those pretty girls, for godsake, trouble!

So they went to her door and, of course, she's in there with him. They're fully dressed; they're just talking by that time. But anyway, we all got arrested.

So . . . I had never been arrested before. To keep down scandal and everything, they said, "Plead guilty, plead guilty." I said, "Well, I don't think that I should plead guilty." But then anyway, that was no big thing, it was my house. They was going to take the night maid. And I said, "Well, don't take her because you know the history of these houses; when they get raided, they get robbed." It was on a Friday. So he left her there.

Well, in the morning she went home. And, of course, I was home. I didn't stay in jail. I got out and come home. And I'm in bed the next morning, and I hear . . . The girls come home that morning, too. I heard drawers slamming and stuff, but they weren't home yet. And I thought well, what in the hell are they doing over there? So I got up. I was barefooted. It was Saturday morning. I went downstairs, and I heard somebody say, "You might get away with it this time, you sonofabitch, but you won't the next." And I heard a slap and I heard a giggle. And I said, "What's going on?" Well, here comes a little boy -- two little boys about 14 years

NARRATOR: old. One went out the hall door to the kitchen and one come in the living room past me. I could have grabbed him had I known what was going on. Sue comes out. I said, "Sue, what happened?" She said, "Well, that little so-and-so in my room" . . . We had these ceiling fans (they're very stylish now, but they weren't then), and I had hooked them up /so that/ instead of turning the light on, it turned the fan on. And he had turned that on and woke her up. By that time we was robbed! They had gone in those girls' room. They got \$190 out of Kim's room. A tape recorder and a radio. They got a small television. They got Mae's sewing machine and, oh, a lot of stuff out of her room. And this girl I'm talking about, this Michele, they robbed her of money. They got money out of all the rooms because the girls were all packed up to leave after getting out of jail.

JB: What address was that?

NARRATOR: That was 7 . . . well, the row of flats that started from 724 . . . where Nasser's flats are now right over the railroad.

JB: And what year was that?

NARRATOR: In the '70s.

JB: Did you get raided like that very often?

NARRATOR: Noooo. That was (laughing) the only time.

JB: The only time you ever got raided?

NARRATOR: That wouldn't have happened only they was fighting with the mayor.

JB: Who was fighting with the mayor?

NARRATOR: The police department. The mayor was having problems so they took their spite out on the houses. And they went up there on North 2nd where Rusty and Rose were, and the maid said, "Well, when you get

Tape 2

NARRATOR: us, be sure you get the blue house," and you get this one and you get that one, so they just took 'em all.

JB: Did you ever have any trouble with the university?

NARRATOR: No.

JB: University officials never bothered you?

NARRATOR: I never did leave any college kids in. These kids got in . . . Edna left them in. And, of course, Michele. She was young and pretty, and naturally this guy's feeding her a line and she's giving him one. And instead of gettin' the hell out of the room and gettin' him out of the house which you're supposed to do, she kept him in there, talkin'.

JB: How did the girls keep from getting pregnant back in the old days? Say, you know, the '30s, '40s.

NARRATOR: Well, I don't know how they done it, but I always had a theory like in the country, you know, if you grease an egg it won't hatch -- a little Carbolic vaseline.

JB: Vaseline.

NARRATOR: Um hm. That was always my theory. I don't know if it worked or not, but it probably did.

JB: And what did they do if they did get pregnant?

NARRATOR: Oh, a lot of girls had their babies. Peg had her baby when she stayed there at 214. I wouldn't let her have an abortion. I didn't believe in them then, but I sure as God do now!

JB: So sometimes they had their babies, sometimes they did have an abortion?

NARRATOR: Oh, yeah!

Tape 2

JB: Where did they have their abortions done in Terre Haute?

NARRATOR: Well, this doctor's dead now that had the reputation so there's no use bringing him up. I never did have any dealings with him, but at this time . . . /let me/ digress a little bit.

When I had the tavern there on Tippecanoe, a man come in that I knew, and he looked terrible. He said, "I want to ask you something, and it's just breakin' my heart to have to ask it, but do you know a doctor, an abortion doctor?" I said, "No, I don't, but I'll find out." So I'm asking everybody and a couple of busybodies got the idea I was asking for my youngest daughter. Got her a bad name for asking for somebody else. But anyway I asked. And the day that he took her down there, that doctor in Olney died. He had heart trouble or something and died.

JB: In Olney?

NARRATOR: Uh huh. Illinois.

So this man . . . it killed him that his daughter was pregnant. She was the granddaughter of a Methodist minister. She was married in church when she was about six months pregnant, and you could tell she was pregnant! Why the hell they went through all of that, I don't know! And why they let her marry him, I don't know because he was nothing.

JB: How long did girls stay with you?

NARRATOR: Oh, God, I had one that stayed with me about ten years off and on. She'd get tired of stayin' there and say, "Well, I'm going up to Muncie and stay with Em and Chip for a while." Then she'd get tired up there. "Comin' back." Back and forth. Come back and forth.

JB: So they'd go from one house to another?

NARRATOR: Sure, because they get old on a job.

JB: They get what?

NARRATOR: Old on the job. See, these men, they don't want the same girl, maybe, constantly; so they change the scenery, and then they're glad to see them again. Bobbie stayed with me for years. Luckie, she stayed with me for years.

JB: You think four . . .

NARRATOR: These girls are dead, too. You know that's something.

Ann, she was the pitiful one with all the ambition of the world -- a kid of the Depression. She'd babysit. I wouldn't leave my kids babysit for the king of . . . what? So this man always took her home. So he got her pregnant. And there was a doctor down in southern Indiana that she could get an abortion for five dollars. And she and another girl hitchhiked down there and hitchhiked back to Connersville. She got peritonitis and damned near died. Well, naturally, she's a kid -- 14 years old. [It] caused the old doctor trouble, and he committed suicide.

Well, when she come to stay with me, she got her a job from an old buzzard that had restaurants over there in Indianapolis. He was another one, you know, that just . . .

I don't know how we can crowd all these years into . . .

JB: Into a short time.

NARRATOR: It's impossible.

JB: Did well known and famous men ever come to your house?

NARRATOR: Oh, I've had men in our place, talking to 'em,

Tape 2

NARRATOR: not for business. Like I said, Jimmy Jones, architects from over to Paris. I met Max Ehrmann.

JB: Max Ehrmann visited your home?

NARRATOR: In the tavern, shure.

JB: He didn't come to the house?

NARRATOR: No.

JB: He came to the saloon?

NARRATOR: The Saddle Club . . . the Terre Haute Saddle Club started at the end of our bar. And who started it was Dr. Ramsey (He was a veterinarian.) and Mick and Charlie Whitlock (who was a lawyer and a prosecutor politician) and Art Gillis and Russ Williams. These guys are all dead now.

JB: So Max Ehrmann was in your place?

NARRATOR: Shure.

JB: Who were some other well-known Terre Haute people?

NARRATOR: I'm tryin' to think. What was his name? He used to have a bakery on Ohio Street. He was German. He wrote a book. And, of course, he's another one of those guys that exaggerates. Said he went in Buster Clark's and they talked in a back room, and the wallpaper's hanging from the wall. They always make everything look so sordid, lurid, or whatever for I don't know. But that wasn't so!

JB: Did you ever send girls to any private homes in Terre Haute?

NARRATOR: (in a whisper) No.

JB: People had to come to your house?

Tape 2

NARRATOR: (continuing in a whisper) . . . Come to the house.

JB: Did other houses send girls to private homes?

NARRATOR: I don't know what other houses done. I couldn't tell you I never . . .

JB: What were the most common ages of your customers?

NARRATOR: Ham, probably middle.

JB: Middle-aged?

NARRATOR: Um hmm.

JB: About how old would that be?

NARRATOR: Well, say, from 40 on was the most common, middle-aged ones. Then you had that younger group, you know. But I never did have too many young people for the simple reason that when I go to the door, I'd look them over and I knew all they had to spend was their time. That time when we got raided, I would have never let those kids in my door if I answered it.

JB: What do you mean, you could tell all you'd have was their time?

NARRATOR: Well, you could look at them. You can tell if a guy's got any money or not. Not any more, the way they dress like a bunch of bums. But /you/ used to be able to look a man over and tell what he had.

JB: How much business did you get from out of town?

NARRATOR: Oh, God, 90 per cent.

JB: From outside Terre Haute?

NARRATOR: Shuuure.

Tape 2

JB: How far away?

NARRATOR: Two hundred miles or more. Shuuuure. God, they wore out that levee road when they had that Paris road out. My goodness, you know they say that's bad publicity, but I have seen five out-of-state cars at 2nd and Cherry at one time. That's money that you never would have got.

JB: So people sould come by car?

NARRATOR: Sure.

JB: To Terre Haute from as far away as 200 miles?

NARRATOR: Um hm.

JB: How about truckers? Did you get truckers?

NARRATOR: Oh, yeah. They come . . . they'd come and go.

JB: Did you get a lot of business from truckers?

NARRATOR: Well, it's fifty-fifty what you got. Just whoever had the idea that day. You couldn't . . . I never thought of it that way who come when but just a spontaneous business.

JB: Did people come on the interurban?

NARRATOR: Well now, see the interurban was going out in the '20s. They probably did.

JB: But you didn't . . . you were there at a time when they weren't using the interurbans. How about by taxi? Did people come by taxi?

NARRATOR: Oh, yeah. Taxicabs.

JB: A lot of business would come by taxi?

NARRATOR: Um hm.

JB: Where would people park their cars when they drove themselves?

Tape 2

NARRATOR: In the lot. Back of me. You know where the Carpenters Hall is? Well, in the lot back there.

JB: Did you have a lot of regular customers?

NARRATOR: Oh, shure.

JB: How regular would a regular customer be?

NARRATOR: According to the man. Sometimes twice a week; twice a month; or once a month; couldn't tell -- /it was/ accordin' to who it was.

JB: So each what? . . . Each regular customer had . . .

NARRATOR: When they wanted to change off, they'd go to another house because they wouldn't want to make that girl mad. But my girls used to say, "Now when you get tired of me and you want to change off, change off in the house. We don't want you going anywhere else because we know what's here and we don't want you bringing us anything extra."

JB: What did they mean by "bringing us anything extra"?

NARRATOR: They meant that they went to the doctor and had their examinations and everything, and they didn't want them bringing them /disease/. I watched a man one time back at Grace Fortune's house there on Mulberry Street.

JB: Grace who?

NARRATOR: Grace Fortune, I told you before about her. I watched him unwrap himself, yard after yard of bandage, clean himself up, went around on the line. I come down out of the house, running down the street, trying to think I could see where he went to tell them, you know, what happened. The first house I come to I said, "If a fellow comes in here dressed so and so and looks like it, watch him because he's just cleaned himself up in the alley over there."

Tape 2

NARRATOR: Of course, she got real snotty. Thought I was trying to knock her out of some money. I said, "Go look at the bandages. They're laying over there on the ground." She said, "Well, it's too late; he's already been here." I said, "Well, tell the girl what happened."

JB: The girls went to the doctor how often?

NARRATOR: Once a week.

JB: And what did he do?

NARRATOR: Give them examinations. Smear. Once a month for a blood test. Now that is not . . . when you go to the doctor, it is not a positive thing, but it's 99% positive. The thing is that you can have that examination and immediately after, maybe, contact, and you'd already had this examination. So it isn't 100%, but it's 99%.

JB: What makes a good landlady?

NARRATOR: Well, I wouldn't know. I wouldn't know if I was good or not, but I always try to just live natural. Treated everybody just like they belonged to me. I told you I was a very unpopular landlady.

JB: You were or weren't?

NARRATOR: I were not. Because I let 'em have a lot of privileges that they weren't supposed to have.

JB: Who?

NARRATOR: The girls. Like if they'd want to go out after midnight, I'd let 'em sneak out. It's all right. Go ahead. Just get the hell out and don't get me in trouble.

JB: What kind of rules did you have for your girls?

NARRATOR: To get up in the morning; take their bath; put on their clothes ready to come downstairs. We always had breakfast at 10 o'clock. But they always

NARRATOR: had the privilege in my house to go to the box or the kitchen and eat whatever you want to. A lot of places . . . now Edith had a rule if you didn't eat your dessert at supper, don't look for it. Buy it. If you wanted anything, send out to King Lem Inn. Well, I don't go for that. If you're living there and you're contributing to the upkeep of the house, it is your home. I always had that idea, so I wasn't very popular with the landladies 'cause I let them go. And I let 'em sneak out to go uptown when they weren't supposed to. I'd just say, "Well, if you're just going to the store, now I trust you. Just go to the store; do what you want to; don't get me in any trouble 'cause I'm in it as much as you are if I let you go." Well, they didn't let me down too often.

JB: What could they have done to get you into trouble?

NARRATOR: Oh, got drunk, raisin' hell up on Wabash Avenue or something or maybe . . . That was the big thing.

JB: How many customers would it be common for a girl to have in 24 hours?

NARRATOR: Well, it's . . . I don't know the possibilities. Some have more than others. I've seen the time when some of them didn't even, what they call, "break luck" in 24 hours. They weren't picked.

But I've seen others that were very popular. So I don't know how you could figure that out percentage-wise.

Another thing, I didn't have any set rule about . . . you got up for your meals, of course. Nobody was going to serve them to you. And you picked up your room; you didn't leave it for the housekeeper.

JB: Did girls own cars?

Tape 2

NARRATOR: Oh, some of 'em. Generally, they bought a car for some pimp to ride some chippy around in.

JB: What's a "chippy"?

NARRATOR: These good-time girls like they have now.

JB: What holidays were particularly good for business?

NARRATOR: Generally, only one girl stayed in a house on a holiday. If a girl had kids or wanted to go to her family, she took off. A girl that didn't have anyplace to go, she stayed. That's the way it was.

JB: So you didn't have much business . . .

NARRATOR: It wasn't that. It was just that they were entitled to their holiday. The girl that stayed at home, she done all right. But the other girls wanted to go with their kids or wherever they went. They wanted to spend the holiday.

JB: Were there particular seasons of the year in which business was especially good?

NARRATOR: Rainy days. (laughs heartily) Rainy days.

JB: A particular night of the week that was good?

NARRATOR: No, but on a lot . . . when the light of the moon, watch out 'cause everybody's crazy! That sounds nuts, but it's true.

JB: Full moon would bring a lot . . .

NARRATOR: Yeah. Full moon. All of the nuts are loose then.

JB: So you might have more trouble during full moon?

NARRATOR: Probably. Um hm. I'd say, "Oh, God, it's the light of the moon. Here comes the nuts."

JB: Did you serve alcohol in the house or next door in the tavern?

NARRATOR: In bootlegging days, I never served any . . . when I lived in my house, I lived in my house. I didn't have anything there. That's 226. When we lived there, didn't have anything . . . just didn't . . . saloon part.

JB: Did customers ever get particularly attached to one girl?

NARRATOR: Oh, yeaah.

JB: Did that ever lead to any trouble?

NARRATOR: Yeeesss, yes, yes. I know a man from Paris had a good business, and he got hooked on Alice Goodnight, and I don't know why. She had never owned a pair of I. Miller shoes. He bought her I. Miller shoes, and she's running up and down the bar showing everybody I. Miller's. 'Course in the Depression that was a quite a thing, you know.

And he bought her tires for her car. And she had a no-good man, and he's telling her all the time that he's building a house in Morningside Heights for her with this money in Muncie. I said, "Alice, that's not so." "Hell, how do you know? You've never been . . ." I said, "I know it's not so, Alice." She wouldn't buy any clothes. She wouldn't buy nothing! Wouldn't even send any cleaning out 'cause she'd have to send that money every Monday morning to George -- a money order. "Our house, our house." Buying pots and pans when she oughta been buying shampoo.

So finally, she thought maybe I was right. So she took a surprise trip up to Muncie, and she went in this Pete It was after '33 'cause beer was in. When she went in there, it was Pete's . . . anyway it was a pretty rowdy place, tavern. And she had caught wind of who this girl was. So she sits down in a booth with her, and this girl is

NARRATOR: telling her all about her boy friend and what he's buying her and everything. And pretty soon he comes and, "Oh, here comes my boy friend now. George . . . I want you to meet my boy friend." She said, "Alice, I know the son-of-a-bitch. I've been married to him for four years." (laughs)

He even took her to that house where they were excavating and telling her ours That's what put her wise. He took her there, and some people come looking at the house. They was inquiring why he was looking at the house and one thing another. That's what put her on her guard, because they run into the people that were really building the house. And he'd been telling her that it was his house -- their house. But anyway he died before her, and she had him cremated. And I said, "Well, now you can throw a pinch of him away every time (laughs) you think about it." (continues laughing)

JB: Did . . .

NARRATOR: But this guy with the Paris business that fell . . . hooked on her, you know, he bought her that house where the clinic is now on 5th Street. And she had all her boy friends and her doin' the work; and ol' guy, he's paying the bills. And he furnished it. I found out she's buying a house; she was going to leave, and I had really kept her when nobody else would have her and picked her up, you know. And I thought, well, I'll see what I can do about this.

So, I went over to Central Furniture Store, and I told Sam, I said, "If I sold some furniture for you, would you give me a salesman's commission?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "O.K."

I said, "Alice, when you get ready to buy that furniture" She yelled, "What furniture?" I said, "That furniture you're going to furnish that house with down there." I said, "Go over there on 4th Street to Silverstein. He'll give you a

NARRATOR: bargain." So she went over and got it. That's where I got some of the furniture I put in "214" when I got it, shavers and stands and one thing and other. Of course, I never got what a salesman would have got as far as that goes, but I got a few pieces that I need.

Well, anyway, she's in this house. By that time, she's sent for her aunt and all. They's just havin' a big family time, and a woman come to the door. She said, "Is _____ here?" "No, he isn't. Would you like to leave a message for him?" She said, "No. I'll just wait for him."

So when he come in, who's sitting there waiting for him? His wife. So she had him declared incapable of handling his own business which she should have done long before she did.

JB: What was his last name?

NARRATOR: Oh, I'm not gonna tell you 'cause they're a real well-known family over in Paris, and he's got a lot of family over there.

But that broke up that playhouse.

JB: Were there phones in the rooms of the girls?

NARRATOR: In my house there was.

JB: How did they use the phone?

NARRATOR: If there were a room having trouble, they would ring it. If they wanted room service, they would ring it. If they had overtime, they would ring it for the maid to come get the money, whatever they wanted.

JB: What was "overtime"?

NARRATOR: Well, after all, they only had 15 minutes for a certain amount. Then if they got more money, why they would ring for it downstairs.

Tape 2

JB: So you would pay before your 15-minute for the 15 minutes, and if you stayed over, then you'd have to pay for what came after.

NARRATOR: That's right.

JB: So you paid for 15 minutes at a time?

NARRATOR: Um hm. Unless you said all day or all night or /took a girl out which seldom happened unless the customer was well-known/.

JB: And you could buy all day or all night?

NARRATOR: Everybody was an independent contractor. Everybody made their own deals.

JB: What kind of things could you buy?

NARRATOR: Oh, we had coke. We had tomato juice. We had (laughs) . . .

JB: I meant, you know, what could they "buy" from the girl to happen during that 15 minutes?

NARRATOR: Oh, God, I don't know; I never did go in their rooms. I let . . . see, that's another thing where I was unpopular because I never did ask all that stuff. I had a rule in our living room, you don't discuss business. If a man comes in and you know how much money he spends, you tell the girl that he takes so she's not cutting your price down. But that was all among the girls; I didn't care to know about it.

JB: Did you have any financial backers of your business?

NARRATOR: Just my own hard head and muscle; nobody ever backed me for anything. The only friend I really had was Nick Filbeck. Now, he did give me good advice. He was a man that done business by your word. If I told him I'd bring him 20 dollars that day, I took 20 dollars that day. But I was always

Tape 2

NARRATOR: too damned hardheaded to ask anybody to give me anything.

JB: Did you pay taxes?

NARRATOR: Shuure, we paid taxes. That's what I always did say; it's a business you have taxation without representation. You had to pay your income tax -- gross income and everything else -- same as anybody else did.

JB: What kind of records did you keep?

NARRATOR: Mine went in as "rooms and service."

JB: So did you have a pretty elaborate bookkeeping system?

NARRATOR: I didn't keep . . . I couldn't keep books if my life depended on it. Mick always took care of the books; I couldn't. I'm lucky I know two and two's four.

JB: Who did the banking?

NARRATOR: We did -- whoever was going to town or whoever done what. You know. We never had any . . . it wasn't a business setup. It was just a living deal. Whoever got ready to go to town would say, well, stop at the bank with this or do this, do that, pay this, pay that . . .

JB: Did you ever hide the books?

NARRATOR: No. Never kept any books 'til I had to!

JB: Did you ever have to show them to anybody?

NARRATOR: Shure, we went through an audit. That's what I told you. That Internal Revenue /man said, /
"These houses make more than people /who/ go to college." I said, "Well then, they shouldn't go to

Tape 2

NARRATOR: college. I didn't tell you to go to college." Oh, he was sarcastic. I didn't like him, and he didn't like me.

JB: Did you have a good relationship with the mayors and the police and the sheriff?

NARRATOR: Yeah. They asked me that. They always said, you know, Ralph Tucker took money. But he didn't take any money from me and nobody else did.

JB: You did not pay off people?

NARRATOR: No. They always had that big deal, but I missed it somehow or other.

JB: What do you mean, they always had it?

NARRATOR: Well, they always said this one took that, and this one took that. If they did, you're a damned fool for giving it to 'em 'cause they didn't ask for it.

JB: So nobody ever asked you for payoffs, and you didn't pay them?

NARRATOR: And those oldtime police that we had, they worked 12-hour shifts. They registered the girls. It was bootlegging days, and if they drank and they wanted a drink, they laid their money on the bar same as anybody else. They took nothing. They were a fine bunch of people. Everybody was . . . a different atmosphere than you have now. I can't convey really the thing that I'm trying to say because it's so impossible to comprehend, really. But they were just a group of people that everybody just went along, and it was a happy-go-lucky, easy-living life.

JB: Did you appear in court very often?

NARRATOR: (signifies by raising a finger)

JB: One time? That time in the '70s.

NARRATOR: That's when I got . . . when I was getting ready to quit. That's the funny part of it. Because that's when these motorcycle gangs started, you know? Well, you're liable to come downstairs at 6 o'clock in the morning, you got a girl sitting on your steps with a suitcase. "Who are you?" (This is when I'm on 5th Street -- not downtown.) "Who are you?" "Well, I'm so-and-so. I'm gonna work here." I said, "You are? Who hired you?" "Well, 'Little Bit'" -- from the Outlaws, you know? -- "he sent me." I said . . . first, I said I didn't know "Little Bit," which I didn't. Well, finally I found out that I had two or three girls in the house that he was maneuvering. And then I rented the flat next door to me to a girl, and he had a little girl over there. She was . . . I knew she was real young. So our kitchen doors were close, and I'd stand out on my porch and I'd start questioning her. I'd say, "Where'd you come from, honey?" She said, "I come from New Albany." (Come from Louisville, but she said New Albany.) I said, "You sure?" She said, "Yeah." And I said, "Well, how'd you get here?" She said, "Well, I can't tell you." Well, I let that go.

And then a couple days later, she's out in the yard and she's cryin'. Rene's /the landlady/ always full of pills. You could talk, whispering, you know; and she couldn't catch your talking to her. She said, "If I had the money, I'd go home." I said, "Would you really go home?" She said, "Yes." She said, "I'd go home . . ." I said, "How much'd it take you to go home?" She said, "Ten dollars." I said, "Well, you wait here."

So I went in the house, and I got a 20-dollar bill and I folded it up. She was smoking a cigarette in the yard. So I took the twenty and I flipped it out in the yard. She threw her cigarette down and went and got it -- got the twenty. She went home.

JB: Who was "Little Bit"?

Tape 2

NARRATOR: I don't know who he was, but he was the scum of the earth whoever he was. He had a motorcycle and a van, and he herded those girls around like a bunch of cattle. And one especially, Billie, now she was dressed for the house, and he come to get her. She put on a pair of cutout jeans and looked like a tramp in five minutes and left another girl in her place. Then another . . . this Rene' . . . I had a girl. Well, this girl I had kept running over there to Rene's. Rene's, Rene's. I said, "Either you work here and stay here. You don't run to the neighbor's. It causes trouble when you run from house to house. You stay home. If you want to move to Rene's, go. If you're going to work here, you stay here." Of course, she disappeared again.

So I'm out in the yard, and I had my flowers and stuff in the yard there. So I'd go out in the evening. I had a security light, and I could work at night. I'd be out there, and I saw a motorcycle parked over on the north side. And I said, "Who's motorcycle is this in the yard?" Nobody answered. Rene, she comes to the door, and she said, "What color is it?" I said, "What in the hell difference is the color?" I said, "Who's it belong to?" She said, "I don't know." I said, "Whoever it belongs to, get it out of my yard. It don't want it in here." I didn't know that he was over in this house. This girl that I had had been a policeman's wife in Indianapolis, and he had got a-hold of her. She had witnessed him shooting a girl. And I think the girl died. A young girl because she wouldn't work. And that's what they were doing -- getting their stories together. Which I didn't know 'til much later.

But anyway I decided I don't want none of these people around me, and they're gonna push theirselves on you. When they find a motorcycle, they oughta just blow the damned thing up and be done with it.

JB: What year was this?

Tape 2

NARRATOR: 'Seventy-two.

JB: Is there any truth to stories that the mafia was in the West End?

NARRATOR: No. No. I had a young Italian come from, he said, Chicago. I couldn't swear to it. And he wanted to buy my "214." And he offered me a lot of money when . . . \$40,000 was a lot of money. Still is as far as I'm concerned. And I just thought he was hot air, and I . . .

END OF TAPE 2-SIDE 1

TAPE 2-SIDE 2

NARRATOR: ". . . to us, and we could do you a lot of good." I said, "What could you do for me?" "Well, if you ever got in any trouble or anything, why we front for you." I said, "I don't need nobody to front for me." "Well, who fronts for you?" I said, "I do. I got a big mouth, and I'm not afraid to use it." "Well," he said, "if anything would happen, what would you do?" I said, "I'd go to headquarters and talk to the chief or the mayor and find out what's going on."

See, it was like a little village down there. And I said, "That's what I pay taxes for. If I want the police, I don't hesitate to call 'em 'cause I sure as hell pay taxes." And I said, "I don't go for this taxation without representation." So he thought I was nuts, and he left me alone, too.

JB: Did you contribute to political campaigns?

NARRATOR: Sure.

JB: Which way did your girls vote?

NARRATOR: However you told them.

JB: However you told them?

Tape 2-Side 2

NARRATOR: Um hm. Whether they done it or not when they got in there, it was a horse of a different color.

JB: But you would tell them how you wanted to vote. How did you decide how you wanted them to vote?

NARRATOR: Well, for instance, we'll get back to McMillan. When he was running, you know, before he got in office, he was down to 300 North 3rd ever' whip-stitch. He was down there with his big feet on the stool expounding. I told Mick, I said, "I don't like him." Mick was a committeeman down there for 11 years. I said, "I don't like him." I said, "He's got too much blarney."

And he was the cheapest guy I ever seen! He'd buy himself a Budweiser. Like we're talking, you buy me a drink; we drink that drink. O.K., when his is done and he wants another drink, he goes to the opposite end of the bar; he gets his Budweiser, and while he's bringing it back to drink, he's wiping it off with his handkerchief -- filthy handkerchief -- and then resumes the conversation just like there's no interruption. I was in the country when Mick come down to bring me home. He said . . . oh, they'd gathered up a lot of scrap. They had really got a /lot/. They won the scrap thing 'cause they really went out and worked. All them West Enders went out and worked for that scrap for McMillan.

Well, the first thing he done, why he started Now, I will say this. When he first started, you could have a crap game and one thing another, which we did. But all of a sudden, I guess . . . I don't know who got to him. But all of that, he was going to be the big man with closing up of the Wabash. But like I told you, it closed up under Joe Duffy. That was the beginning of it, a wartime measure.

JB: So how did you ask your girls then to vote?

NARRATOR: When you go to the polls, you vote for such-

Tape 2-Side 2

NARRATOR: and-such; use the card.

JB: So you want them to vote for people who . . .

NARRATOR: But on the other hand, you know, I wasn't going to vote. I don't believe in women voting to start with. I wasn't going to vote.

So, they sent George Marshall down to make me vote, right before closin' time. So I went with him all right. We had Australian ballot then. "Want anybody to go in with you?" /asked/ Jack Hines. I said, "If I did, I'd want somebody to help me smarter than me." So I marked every box clear across that ballot, then marked it from corner to corner, folded it up, and dropped it in the box. I said, "Well, you can take a horse to water, but you shure can't make him drink!"

JB: Were you looked down on or insulted by anybody in Terre Haute?

NARRATOR: Oh, probably behind my back, plenty, but not to my face. They all bowed down and /called me by name/ when I was spending money.

JB: So did you feel pretty well accepted then by the community?

NARRATOR: I feel accepted anywhere I go. Yeah, I'm past president of the Prairie City Division of the O.R.C., the railway conductors' local. I'm past trustee of 972 V.F.W. I've belonged there over 35 years. I belong to the American Legion. I don't feel I owe nobody any apologies. It's my life, and I've lived it like I wanted to.

JB: Do you agree with the opinion that the houses cut down on rape and sex crimes?

NARRATOR: I certainly do! You don't know the creeps that come in those houses. I certainly do, but I wouldn't advocate houses now because it's too far gone! These kids from that size up could tell you

Tape 2-Side 2

NARRATOR: the mysteries of life now! Uh uh. And this discrimination bit. You'd have everybody comin' to your door. Uh uh! I wouldn't want a house now for a thousand dollars a minute.

JB: Why do you suppose Terre Haute had such a large, you know, red light district? Why was the West End so large . . .

NARRATOR: It wasn't any bigger; I know places that were bigger! God, there was all kinds of towns that were open. Terre Haute got the reputation, but there was plenty of 'em.

JB: So you don't think it was particularly large for the size of the town?

NARRATOR: Nooo. Nooo. And I think it was a gem that they should have left in the proper setting. It would be no good now. It was all right in its day when I was there. I saw what went on; I know what went on. And when I see what goes on now, I cannot equate the two.

JB: How did the Depression affect your business?

NARRATOR: Well, that started a change in the girls. Used to be when a girl come to work for you, you asked her what she done for this money. And if she done stuff that they think's common now, you wouldn't take her. When the Depression come, why they broke out like the measles. Everybody started.

JB: Everybody started what?

NARRATOR: Different ways, different methods.

JB: O.K. I'm confused now.

NARRATOR: Well, you read about it every day. They talk about it in college.

JB: O.K. You say . . .

Tape 2-Side 2

NARRATOR: You go to bed natural or unnatural.

JB: Uh huh.

And how did the Depression . . .

NARRATOR: All the girls wanting money, and they'd started changing their ways to get the money.

JB: O.K. So you think things became more unnatural because they wanted money so badly.

NARRATOR: It's only a question of economics. If those people had the money they needed, they wouldn't have been there to start with. I, myself, if I had the money that I needed, I wouldn't have been there. I'd have been somewhere else.

JB: So you were in the business strictly for money?

NARRATOR: That's right.

JB: How about World War II? How did that affect your business?

NARRATOR: Oh, boy, it boomed there for a while until we got closed up. (chuckles)

And that's another thing. I've had in my music room a whole group of boys. Maybe only one of them went upstairs. But they would all sit there, talk, drink, whatever. I had a Recordio Gray. You could make records. We'd make records for them and all kind of stuff; just had open house for them when they come.

JB: And what kind of boys were these? Were these . . .

NARRATOR: Soldiers.

JB: Soldiers.

Tape 2-Side 2

NARRATOR: Going . . . some of them getting ready to be shipped out, their last trip home and everything. Well, naturally, it was a miniature USO really. 'Cause I never turned any of 'em away.

JB: Were there any troop movements to this area that affected your business?

NARRATOR: Not that I know of. Uh uh. I remember a convoy going through several times; and I remember, oh, the boys coming home on their furloughs and getting shipped out and one thing and other.

JB: Did Prohibition affect your business at all?

NARRATOR: Well, see, I wasn't in the business only in . . . Prohibition was what started it. So it really affected . . . Lousy business! Church people should have minded their business.

JB: But it didn't cut down on customers? Prohibition?

NARRATOR: Oh, God, no. Those first few years of Prohibition that money flowed like water.

JB: Where did people get their booze during Prohibition?

NARRATOR: Different places. Different stills.

JB: Were there a lot of stills in this area to get . . .

NARRATOR: Oh, yeah. A lot of them. Different capacities. Some made just a little; some made a whole lot. I know a guy that went in the bootlegging business until he got \$10,000, and then he went out of it. He wanted \$10,000 to buy a farm, and that's what he done. He quit.

 But just a bunch of kids that I went to school with, that's what killed my soul. Killing each

Tape 2-Side 2

NARRATOR: other. They were all friends and killing each other over damned territory and stuff.

JB: Related to bootlegging?

NARRATOR: Shuure. Whisky. Just made criminals outta kids that woulda never got there to start with.

JB: Were there famous gangsters that hung out in Terre Haute during Prohibition?

NARRATOR: Oh, I've heard people tell about all of that. Well now, we had some boys that come to Terre Haute. There was the Traums and . . .

JB: The who?

NARRATOR: Traums -- Joe Traum -- and Eddie O'Hare, Jackie Bell, Joe Cole, Homer Wright. He could make the Traums jump through the eye of a needle. I went to school with him. He finally got killed down at Palmyra through the government's interception on the telephone. They had his phone tapped. He lived in Louisville.

JB: When was this?

NARRATOR: Back in the '30s, about '32, '33, just before Prohibition. And whenever he would come to Terre Haute for a load, he would come to my place. I had a place at 124 North 2nd then. And he would call up, and they would come get his car and load it and bring it back. And I always kept him because I knew him damned near all my life, and we were friends . . . friends. So . . . and these guys when they'd come, I'd always say, "O.K. Give me your guns." I would take their guns and hide 'em. I didn't want no trouble in my house. So one morning -- on a Sunday morning -- two fellas come in, one from St. Louis and one from East St. Louis. They said, "Did you hear what happened to Homer?" I said, "Yeah, I heard what happened to him." We were in front of a library table in the

Tape 2-Side 2

NARRATOR: back room, and I was standing here and Tommy Fagan was standing there and Crooked Neck Crane was standing here. I said, "Yeah, I heard and I hope the S.O.B. that done it never has another day's luck in their life." They said, "Do you care if we wash up?" I always did leave 'em wash up or change their clothes or whatever they wanted to do. This was at the tavern. I said, "Give me your guns." Well, one looked at the other real straight, but they didn't give me their guns. When I made that remark, they looked at each other real straight. I was treading on thin ice, but I didn't know it. And I always did say, and I'll say 'til the day I die that they are the guys that killed Homer Wright. That's the only conclusion I could get. It's the first time they ever come to my house; they were messed up, dirty; they didn't leave me check their guns; and the look that went between 'em twice; and I couldn't get anything else through my mind.

JB: Who were they? Where did they come from?

NARRATOR: Crane come from East St. Louis; Tommy Fagan come from St. Louis. They were hooked up with Traum. The government had Homer's telephone tapped. Every time a load would start, they'd knock it off. Well, they got it around among themselves that Homer had 'em knocked off. It wasn't Homer. It was the federal people tappin' his phone.

JB: Who were the Traums?

NARRATOR: Two brothers, Blackie and Joe Traum. They'd always just say they were "Egan rats." That's a bunch of stuff, too, because there was no such thing. They were from South St. Louis, some of that South St. Louis bunch.

JB: And these could have all been gangsters?

NARRATOR: They were.

JB: They were?

NARRATOR: They were.

Tape 2-Side 2

JB: Could you tell in your business . . . could you sense through your business when economy was up and when it was down, or did business stay very steady?

NARRATOR: No. You could always tell. You could tell when good times and bad times and how much they would put down - spending less money or spending more money.

JB: Would they come as frequently but pay less when times were down?

NARRATOR: Yeah. They'd say, "Well, I can't spend that much money this time, go the minimum" or something. It was kind of give and take, happy-go-lucky.

JB: Did the mining industry affect you at all? I mean, did you get a lot of miners?

NARRATOR: Oh, shuuuuurrrre. Why when those big things . . . you know, when Terre Haute started to go down was when the stampin' mill /Columbian and Enamelling, now General Housewares/ went on strike the first time.

JB: The what mill?

NARRATOR: The stamping mill, Columbian stamping. They went through the streets like a bunch of ruffians with baseball bats and clubs and /said, / "Close your goddamn door. Close your goddamn door!" Closing all the businesses up.

JB: What was that?

NARRATOR: That was . . . when the hell was that? That must have been in the '30s, too, but I can't just get it in my mind. /1935/ But I remember the day very well. They come down and hollering "Close up. Close up." I'm standing on the corner looking at 'em. I said, "What the hell are you talking about?" "Well, the Union!" I said, "Well, nobody belongs to the union here."

Tape 2-Side 2

JB: Why were they telling you to close up?

NARRATOR: They wanted to close down everything. Didn't want anything to go. To sympathize with the strike.

So I thought well, maybe I'd better close the front door to save the glass, you know. So I did, but who . . . when they got through their marchin', who was in the back room drinking? The paraders. They were all back there. Bunch of hypocrites!

JB: So they asked you . . . they come to your front door and asked you to close, and then they come around to the back door to drink.

NARRATOR. Marchin' down the street, just hollered it. "Close up! Close up! Close up!" "Who the hell are you?" (laughs) "Where'd you come from?"

JB: What do you think are some of the main ways that Terre Haute has changed since, say the '20s and '30s when you were in business?

NARRATOR. Well, I know there was a lot of money floating around; I know that. And you sure got more for your money. I could go to town and buy a washdress for \$2.98 that you have to pay \$20 for now. And everything was well made. Now you buy something, the buttons are off or you might have a long sleeve and a short sleeve. It's all made in Taiwan, Hong Kong, or some other far-flung place. Who cares? The workmanship isn't there. We lost a lot of industry over that strike. The railroads were all going then. We had a lot of industry in Terre Haute. We had Mewhinney's Candy Company that . . . they used to make us up a punchboard, and we sold so damned many of them that they'd . . . any time of night we'd want to call them up, they'd get up and make us one.

JB: Make you a what?

NARRATOR: Punchboard.

Tape 2-Side 2

JB: What's that?

NARRATOR. It's against the law. It's gambling. You know. Punchboard. You punch out a number and you win a prize. Well, they'd make you out, oh, elaborate . . . and their candy boxes were beautiful. We had Berry's restaurant then that the food was wonderful. We didn't have all these quick meal joints. We had King Lem Inn. We had Levinson's. We had Feibelman's. We had Levi's. Levi's was a dry goods store that you could buy all sorts of laces and material. Anything you wanted, that store had. Had the oldtime baskets that they put the money in. We had Levin Bros. over the bank /Terre Haute Savings Bank on southwest corner of 6th and Ohio Streets/. We had just one lot of stuff that's not here.

Up and down Wabash Avenue we had a lot of photographers -- good, bad and indifferent. We had . . . trying to think of their name. They had a hardware store on the southwest corner of 4th and Wabash, I guess it was. Yeah, 4th and Wabash. Juergens. Juergens. We had Snyder's Art Shop. We had Viceroy's. We had Adams China next to the Savoy theater.

We had a lot of picture shows and Terre Haute used to be a good show town. We had all kind of show people, which some would drift down. I've met so many people that if I kept autographs, I'd have a fortune. But I never did feel that I should ask anybody for their address -- their autograph. Who are they? They're just another person.

JB: Who were some of them that you could have gotten autographs from?

NARRATOR: Well, I can start from when I was a kid. I could of got -- during the first war -- I could have got Major Joffre in St. Louis. I could have had President Taft. He went right, closer than you are to me, right down the street in a parade.

Tape 2-Side 2

NARRATOR: I could have had all sorts of actresses' and actors'. Anna Held, she was still an actress when I was a kid and so was Lillian Russell. They all come to theaters in our neighborhood. But I wouldn't stand and ask anybody. I got the attitude, "you're only somebody; why should I ask you for your name?"

JB: If Terre Haute is less exciting now than it used to be, what made it such an exciting town back in the '30s?

NARRATOR: It's the most humdrum, godforsaken place that ever was now. You could walk uptown. They changed the windows on a Sunday and a Wednesday. Well, on Sunday we would walk uptown and on Wednesday we would walk uptown. You would windowshop. The stores were all . . . the windows were dressed beautifully. They had nice stuff. You had Silver Specialty Shop. You had things that you don't hear of now. Let's see, you had Rosenfeld's milliners. Down on 4th Street there was a milliner, too, I think. I think Anne Cronin's father had that, if I'm not sure.

JB: Who's father?

NARRATOR: Anne Cronin. Not Anne Pfister Cronin. Anne Cronin. And . . . just places that I can't think of now. But anyway you could walk up and down the street. We had ice cream parlors. You had stuff you could stop in, you could get lunch, you could get this, you could get that. Could you walk up Wabash Avenue now at night? Do you know on those streets it'd be so crowded it was like old home week. "Hello, how are you?" Stop a few minutes. There'd be cars lined up on the curb, people talking back and forth, "How are you?" and just a big, open-air living room, a different spirit, a different thing altogether. There's no comparison between Terre Haute then and now. We've got the college, but . . . I hope to God it does somebody some good!

JB: What did you know about Terre Haute because of

Tape 2-Side 2

JB: your business that say the owner of a fish store wouldn't know?

NARRATOR: I don't know. Outside of selling fish, Furr's Fish Market . . . (chuckles)

JB: I'm just guessing that because of all the people that came to your place, you knew a great deal about Terre Haute -- more than other business people.

NARRATOR: That reminded me we had Furr's Fish Market, too. You know. Back in those days.

JB: Whose?

NARRATOR: Furr's, f-u-r-r-s, Furr's Fish Market. Carmichael's had the cream separator place. Oh, there used to be a little mill we bought feed from. I can't remember the name of it. It was . . . I think Salty Seamon painted a picture of it. We used to buy feed there, down on 1st or 2nd -- 2nd Street I think. Down further. I think he painted a picture of it. But anyhow, it's altogether different.

We had people with a lot of money come in and just sit around and have a good time. You didn't know if they had any money or not, and you didn't care. You were just having a good time talking.

JB: Did you have to be pretty careful about all that you knew? About Terre Haute? About what you said to whom?

NARRATOR: Oh, naturally, you wouldn't give away who's in your house. A lot of times if somebody was in the house . . . for instance, I know (begins laughing) one morning at "214" about 6 o'clock in the morning, Riddle and Tucker come knocking at the door.

JB: Who's Riddle?

NARRATOR: Chief of Police.

JB. And you're talking about Ralph Tucker?

NARRATOR: Yeah. And things were . . . oh, the house was full of people. And I'm real happy, you know, 'cause everybody's having a good time and money's rolling in. And I went to the door and I said, "You want in?" They said, "Well" (the light kinda shaded them, and I wasn't really paying any attention to them) "Well, we don't know whether we do or not." Just then a fellow stepped around on the step, and I said, "Well, if you don't want in, step out of the way and leave a boy in that wants in." So he kinda looked at them funny, but he come on in! So then Ralph, he spoke up. He said, "Are you going to serve breakfast?" I took another look, and I said, "O-my-God, I don't know whether I am or not!" He said, "You empty this house up." He said, "You've got more people here than there is at 7th and Wabash." I said, "Well, we've got more here (laughing) than there is at 7th and Wabash."

So I went in. I knew he wasn't going to do nothing to me that day 'cause when he saw those cars and those license plates, I knew he wasn't. So I went in and I said, "I hate to tell you this, but Tucker says we have to close up." "The hell with him. Tell him to come on in here." "He's already gone," I said. "He'll just cause me some trouble later on maybe." He said, "The hell with him. He'd better not." So they stayed.

JB: What did you mean when you said he wouldn't do anything because of all the cars and license plates?

NARRATOR: Well, it was kinda important license plates that happened that day, and I knew that he wasn't. Had a guy from up northern Indiana, House of Representatives, and one thing another. I knew he wasn't going to do anything to me real bad then. But I thought, oh Christ, wait 'til tomorrow!

Tape 2-Side 2

JB: Did you end up knowing, you know, a lot of really important information about Terre Haute that a lot of people would have really liked to know and you just had to be quiet about it because it was . . .

NARRATOR: Oh, yeeaah. I saw some of those people bloom out like a rose with their nose clean that I remember when a bank closed and two of the guys committed suicide and one thing another. And I remember one getting sent to prison and . . . I won't go into that.

JB: Have you ever been asked, you know, to defend prostitution? Asked to talk about that or . . .

NARRATOR: Oh, yeah, a lot of times, but what is there to talk about? It's just people making a living. There's nothing to talk about. They're just people. Economy. They can just in their own mind figure, "well now, if I was broke and didn't have any money and had a couple of kids to support, what would I do?" And there's always somebody around that'll give you a proposition. Don't worry about that.

JB: Have you been involved in debates on the subject?

NARRATOR: (in very soft voice) No.

Debates is just one person's opinion. I got mine and they got theirs. Like I say, if the do-gooders and the church people'd mind their business and stay in their churches, the other people, if they want out of where they are, they will find their church. If you're living in a house and you don't like it, you move where you want to go. It's the same thing exactly. I saw a lot of girls get married and move out and that was the end of it. And I saw a lot of them get lower than the gutter. But when you want to go, you go. I saw a lot of girls make some good marriages. And some of them lasted.

JB: Some of the marriages lasted?

NARRATOR: Um hm. Funny thing, most of those girls . . . most of 'em are darned good housekeepers, you'd be surprised.

JB: Are there very many girls . . . people who were prostitutes in the past who you know are living in Terre Haute now with families?

NARRATOR: Oh, I know one that works in a hospital. She's worked there since the line closed up. I know another one that she married a guy that works at the Tribune, and she was a marvelous cook. I know quite a few of 'em around.

JB: Are any of these people ones who worked for you?

NARRATOR: No.

JB: You don't have any . . .

NARRATOR: Oh, no. And I know another one. I met her one time someplace, and I spoke to her. She said . . . first thing she said was, "O-my-God! Don't say anything about the West End." I said, "I only said 'hello' and I'm sorry I said that."

JB: What do you think are the positive contributions of the houses of the West End? What are the positive contributions of prostitution?

NARRATOR: You used to . . . now you didn't get any kids running in the neighborhood. They were told to stay out of there. They had something to kind of look down on maybe. These kids now, they go everywhere, they see everything. And like me coming to Terre Haute, I heard all the music and everything, and I liked it. And I would still like it. Everybody had something to look at. You were warned, "don't go here, don't go there." If those people saw any of those kids that lived down there after

Tape 2-Side 2

NARRATOR: 9 o'clock, "Get on home, your ol' man's looking for you" or something. And they didn't talk back to you either!

Now, like I told you before, Junior Bauman, Carl Bauman, he belonged here at the Boys' Club, and he was a good athlete. He was a whizz on the trampoline and one thing another. Well, he went to the damn war. He was on the Enola Gay, and they went down on the ice floe. I think they were down there, I don't know, maybe 40 days on that ice floe.

Then when he come back, he married some girl he went to school with. And that didn't pan out at all and he just became a derelict. And the Saturday Evening Post wrote him up -- all these fellows that was on the Enola Gay -- and poor ol' Junior, he was the only one that didn't do any good. The rest were doctors and whathaveyou, and they got Junior sitting there on a barstool waiting for another drink of wine. And I thought that was terrible. And I think that the war contributed to his downfall. And her. I blame her, too. Because she, after she divorced him or he divorced her, whatever, she married another fellow. And then, she run off with the woman's husband that had seen to it when she was a kid going to Hook school, that she could go to all the parties and everything dressed up. This woman would send her with her daughter /dressed/ just the same. So she run off with her husband to California.

JB: Who was Junior Bauman?

NARRATOR: Junior, Carl Bauman.

JB: Yeah. Who was he?

NARRATOR: Just a kid from the West End. On the Enola Gay.

JB: What's that word?

Tape 2-Side 2

NARRATOR: Enola Gay. That plane that was named after the pilot's mother. You've read of that. /The b-29 which dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima./

JB: Why is prostitution a good thing?

NARRATOR: Oh, good or bad, I don't know. I wouldn't . . . see, my ideas are much different than a lot of other people. I wouldn't say it's good, I wouldn't say it's bad. But I do say that if a person has that urge and they want to go someplace, it's better to go and spend their money than it is to grab some girl and talk her into it, which they're doing a mile a minute now. Or probably rape somebody. /I was/ reading last night about somebody out in . . . down in Florida. Bodies buried in the yard, of children. They don't belong in jail, they need shot. This man got 10 years, so there's three bodies in the yard. Is that 10 years going to pay for three children?

JB: Who are you aware of in Terre Haute who would also be a good resource for talking about the old days, in addition to yourself?

NARRATOR: Well, there's so many of them that wouldn't talk to you that could.

JB: But who are those people? Who could talk but wouldn't?

NARRATOR: I wouldn't tell you. Like these women I'm talking about. They'd deny that they'd ever saw the neighborhood.

JB: Yeah.

NARRATOR: "Don't say nothing about the West End!" I said, "I only said 'hello'!"

JB: Yeah. Who are some people though that would remember that . . .

Tape 2-Side 2

NARRATOR: I want to tell you something. You know you just said did anybody ever cut me down. They better never 'cause I've got a vicious tongue.

I went over to Oakley store one time, and there's a girl that had the restaurant across the street. Now, she'd been down in the West End working. /Sherry Nichol/ was her landlady. And she come there on a stock truck broke, in the wintertime, with white shoes which they didn't wear then. So when I went in, I said, "Hi, Mildred." Oh, she looked me up and down like I was a microbe under a microscope. And the cashier said, "I think you made a mistake. Her name is Betty." Now, she could have avoided all this. She could have said, "Oh, you forgot my name." /I would have got the message./ I said, "Oh, yes, she remembers me. I remember her when she come in the wintertime down there to Sherry Nichol's," I said, "on a stock truck with a pair of white shoes. Sure, she remembers me!" I just walked off and left her standing there. Don't never do that.

Went one time (starts to laugh) at a VFW, Ruth Carmichael said, "Oh, I'm so afraid somebody will say you had a house down in the West End." I said, "I'm not." I said, "If they want first-hand information, ask me. And if they don't want to ask me, ask Harry Barton." He's the bartender, and he used to be a lieutenant in the police, you know. "Ask him. He'll tell you. He's first-hand news." And I said, "You know, looking around here I see an awful lot of familiar faces both male and female." So that stopped that.

Another time I went as a delegate up to Ft. Wayne 6th District meeting. The same woman said, "Well, kid, we're not having a very good time." We had a room at the YWCA. She said, "We're not having a very good time." I said, "Well, what do you want to do, Ruth? We're going to the meetings and that. What do you want to do?" "Well, we're not having a good time!" She wanted to go in the Emerald Room

Tape 2-Side 2

NARRATOR: there at the Oliver Hotel. She didn't drink, and neither did I. I said, "Ruth, that place is crowded with people spending money, and they don't want us in there drinking Coca Cola, and I'm not going into the Emerald Room with you. If you want to go, now you go." "But," I said, "they're expecting maybe \$30 a hour out of one of those seats, and we're not spending that kind of money." So, "We're just not having any fun. We're not having any fun." So then the Michigan City Post, they furnished a bus back and forth. So we rode back and forth on the bus a few times, and we stopped there and drank coke and one thing another in there. But when you're about 50 years old, what-in-the-hell is there to do at a convention if you're not drinking or shacking up with somebody? Nothing. You went there for a meeting, so you went for a meeting. But she was the first one that would throw her hands up in horror and say, "Oh, my goodness!"

So when I was Rehabilitation out there at the VFW, I had somebody make us some stands. I told the women, I said, "Come on down and we'll /work on them at 2nd/. There was nobody there then. It was closed up. I said, "Come on down. We'll work in the back room." Which they did. And this same one I'm talking about ("we didn't have any fun"), she sat there and told some of the jokes. Now, I'm not a jokester and I don't joke. A lot of people do which is fine and dandy. That's their bag. And I said, "You know, Ruth, I want to tell you something. I had a houseful of girls in this very room, and I never heard one of 'em talk like you're talking."

And I heard that same thought. A man come to the house one time. He was a farmer from down south. And he said, "Me and mom's been married 40 years," he said. "The women had a meeting over there /at our house/ one day, and about noon time I slipped in and laid down on the davenport. It was hot." And he said, "you know I never knew mom could talk like that." So it probably happens

Tape 2-Side 2

NARRATOR: all over. I don't have any illusions about people. They're just people.

JB: Did your business teach you that?

NARRATOR: Hm?

JB: Did your business teach you that?

NARRATOR: Living taught me that. I'm 79 years old pretty soon, and living taught me that. People are all the same. Take the skin off, and they all bleed. What one person won't do, the other one will, but they might come back and do that. You can't tell; they might. And after I've seen preachers and school-teachers and coaches and what-all . . . and a woman coming in the door wanting to come in and watch her husband. Another woman had all this group deal going along with my neighbor. Uh uh. I don't have no illusions about people. Forget them. I don't know why the good Lord made so many of them. I don't think he had (starts laughing) anything to do with it. (continues laughing)

JB: Maybe that's a good place to turn off the tape. I think we're . . .

NARRATOR: How?

JB: . . . just about near the end.

NARRATOR: Oh, I don't know how I could cram all of these years into that . . . this time consumed. I could still talk for . . .

JB: Still talk for many more hours?

NARRATOR: Yeah. Just things come to your mind as you go along. That's the reason you could never write a book about it because it would just have to be in chapters, short stories.

END OF TAPE

INDEX

Columbian Enameling &
Stamping Co., 83
Community Chest, 26-27
Downtown, 7-8, 84-87
Duffy, Joseph, 76
Gangsters, 75, 81-82
General Strike, 83-84
Jones, Jim, 21-24
McMillan, Vern, 4-6, 76
Politics, 4-6, 56-57, 72,
75-77, 87-88
Prohibition, 24-26, 80-81
Prostitution, 1-95
Red light district, 1-95
Saddle Club, Terre Haute, 60
Traum, Blackie & Joe, 81-82
Tucker, Ralph, 72, 87-88
West End, 1-95
Wright, Homer, 81-82